



# National Defense

Strategic Annual Journal – Issued by National Defense College – Issue 04 – June 2017

## The Role of the Air Force in Joint Operations

The US, the GCC and the Shifting of World Balance of Power

Mohammed bin Rashid:

The Graduates of the National Defense College are the Nation's Partners in Decision Making



**Mohammed bin Rashid:** Mohammed bin Zayed is my brother, supporting friend and life-long companion



# Editorial

The UAE has steadily progressed in its development plans to achieve the welfare and prosperity of its people. The UAE leadership works diligently to overcome the challenges of protecting the national interests and having a comprehensive national security by providing a secure and stable environment and wisely using the national resources and instruments of power. Under the unprecedented current changes, our wise leadership is able to steadily and wisely lead the country in which UAE today has become a regional and international model that achieves unmatched records using innovative methods, approaches and efforts that are full of optimism and aspirations.

With high efficiency, our armed forces is capable of cooperating with other national institutions in the development process since it is capable of addressing the national demands in terms of protecting the country's leadership, land and people. Moreover, our country today is capable of playing critical roles in achieving international peace and regional stability in addition to contributing to establishing the required secure environment for the development process, which is wisely guided by our wise leadership.

Following more than four years and after graduating four national defense courses, NDC moves towards achieving its mission, vision and objectives to have a well-established national, regional and international status with the help of Allah the Almighty and a number of factors that prove that dreams can be turned into reality. One of these factors is the support of the wise leadership as well as the clear vision and close follow up of the NDC Higher Council and UAE Armed Forces GHQ in addition to the diligence of NDC officers, other ranks, and civilian staff.

The courage of the heroes of the UAE Armed forces displayed in various fields has had a great impact on encouraging their brothers at NDC to provide their best to serve their country and indeed, they have done their utmost since their brothers in arms have pledged their lives to UAE.

With the support of Allah, our NDC has developed its PhD program, which will be launched soon being accredited by the UAE Ministry of Higher Education. Furthermore, NDC has included the regional issues and events in the fourth NDC Course 2016-2017 to enable military and civilian participants to have the required knowledge and skills for understanding the strategic environment and the associated strategic variables, as well as the methods of utilizing the instruments of state power by keeping pace with the current events and understanding the motives and forms of such variables. This has enabled them to have a strategic knowledge and leadership skills that can give them comprehensive vision and horizons towards more professionalism in implementing national strategies that are part of the national strategy. Moreover, the faculty of NDC has a critical role in linking the academic programs with the current situation and guiding the academic process in an interactive methodology that really suits the level and experience of participants and motivates them to more learning and research.

The indicators in each year prove the success of NDC throughout the first four years, thanks to the support of the NDC Higher Council, the UAE Armed Forces GHQ and the collaboration of the state's officials and institutions as well as proficiency and motivation of all NDC staff.

In this current issue of the NDC Journal, the editorial staff spares no effort in providing diversified and distinguished articles to address the needs of various readers. In recognition of their efforts, I would like to express my due respect and appreciation. I also avail myself of this opportunity to express my gratitude to all NDC staff, wishing them progress and success.

Finally, I would like to congratulate the graduates of the fourth NDC Course who honored the college with their excellent performance being a highly aspirational group who want to serve our country and move the UAE forward in steady and confident steps and high aspirations. They have a firm self-confidence and a belief in having high aspirations and in paying back to their country and its wise leadership. I wish all of them success in achieving goodness for the UAE.

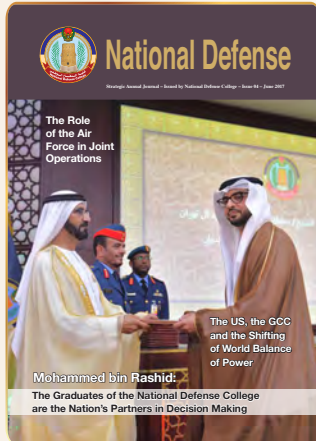


## National Defense



**Major General Staff Pilot  
Rashad Mohamed  
Alsaadi**  
Commander of the  
National Defense College  
(NDC)

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## National Defense

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حفل تسليم شهادات الماجستير لدورة الدفاع الوطني الثالثة 2015 - 2016  
الأربعاء 2016 / 6 / 22





# Editor in Chief

Thanks to God and His support, the release of the fourth issue of the National Defense Magazine has coincided with the graduation of the fourth national defense batch in line with the ambitious outlook of the National Defense College (NDC). NDC is looking forward to broader, more professional horizons in the preparation of military and civilian leaders and the development of their capabilities to identify and evaluate the challenges of national, regional and international security. On this occasion, it pleases the Editorial Board of the National Defense Magazine in its fourth issue to congratulate its readers on the Year of Giving, that was launched by His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, may Allah protect him, for the year 2017. It is high time our nation took pride in its outstanding track record of giving before taking pride in achievements. In this context, I would quote the visionary words of HH the President: "When people take pride in achievements, we pride ourselves on being the sons of Zayed Al Khair; and when people talk about history, we talk about a history of giving." In this year of giving, we recall what the late founding father Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, may God rest his soul in peace, said: "The desert has taught us to be patient for a long time for good to grow. We must persevere and continue the process of building in order to achieve the good of our country."

The Editorial Board also documented the good moments that culminated in the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai and Minister of Defense, for the graduation ceremony. His Highness praised the high academic level attained by the National Defense College during a short period. He described the college as a factory of men who are well-qualified with the strength of science, innovation and creativity in their specialties that enable them to participate in national decision-making and proper planning to protect our national security and achievements. These words constitute great and profound strategic foundations for graduates. They will return to their national institutions armed with science, experience and strategic thinking so as to be able to manage, evaluate and analyze challenges and crises and achieve national interests at the regional and international levels.

The fourth issue of the magazine is rich and distinguished in form and content. The articles and studies presented by Their Excellencies the ministers and senior officials of the state, members of the Steering Committee at the college and students, addressed the variables of the strategic environment and the rapid changes in the balance of power and interests. The rules of conflict in the region have changed after the emergence of the Fourth and Fifth Generation Warfare, the wars by proxy and sectarian wars. These contributions have enriched the National Defense magazine with their insightful content that is worthy of in-depth and extensive research. The current issue of the magazine boasts articles authored by knights of the pen, with brilliant minds and deep strategic thought, that constitute high-profile analytical cognitive additions to serve decision makers and researchers in various strategic matters.

In conclusion, we recall proudly - in the year of goodness and giving in the United Arab Emirates - the sacrifices offered by our valiant martyrs in the battlefields to safeguard the national security we enjoy in the country of giving. To them and to every vigilant soldier defending this dear homeland, we say: "Your blood, which has irrigated the land of goodness and giving, will always serve as a guiding light for all of us to give more in order to achieve the national interests of our dear country."



## National Defense



Staff Brigadier  
**Abdulla Al Zaabi**  
Editor in Chief



## **Mohammed bin Rashid: The Graduates of the National Defense College are the Nation's Partners in Decision Making**

**His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of UAE and Ruler of Dubai, attended the graduation ceremony of the fourth session of the National Defence College in Abu Dhabi.**

The graduation ceremony was also attended by Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and Chairman of Dubai Execu-

tive Council, Dr. Amal Abdullah Al Qubaisi, Speaker of Federal National Council, Sheikh Tahnoun bin Mohammed Al Nahyan, Abu Dhabi Ruler's Representative in the Al Ain

Region, and Lt. General Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior.





Sheikh Ahmed bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Chairman of Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Knowledge Foundation, Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, Minister of Culture and Knowledge Development, Pilot Staff-Brigadier Sheikh Ahmed bin Tahnoun bin Mohammed Al Nahyan, Chairman of the National and Reserve Service Authority, Hussain bin Ibrahim Al Hammadi, Minister of Education, Mohammed bin Ahmed Al Bowardi, Minister of State for Defence Affairs, Noura bint Mohammed Al Kaabi, Minister of State for Federal National Council Affairs, and Lt. General Hamad Mohammed Thani Al Rumaithi, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, also attended the graduation ceremony.





# The Role of the Air Force in Joint Operations

The ability to effectively synchronize and execute Joint Operations continues to stand out as one of the key factors in the success of combat operations today. As we all know, it has truly become a team effort with the Army, Navy, Special Ops, and the Air Force & Air Defense each playing a

pivotal role in fulfilling the objectives set forth in the Joint Force Commander's campaign plan. As with everything, each level of measured success has often come with its fair share of challenges, both during the planning and during the execution phase. From a joint perspective, a better understanding beforehand

of the specific processes and procedures as well as some of the challenges each of the Service Components face in executing the mission can go a long way in smoothly transitioning from our day-to-day peace time ops to a high intensity joint combat operation.

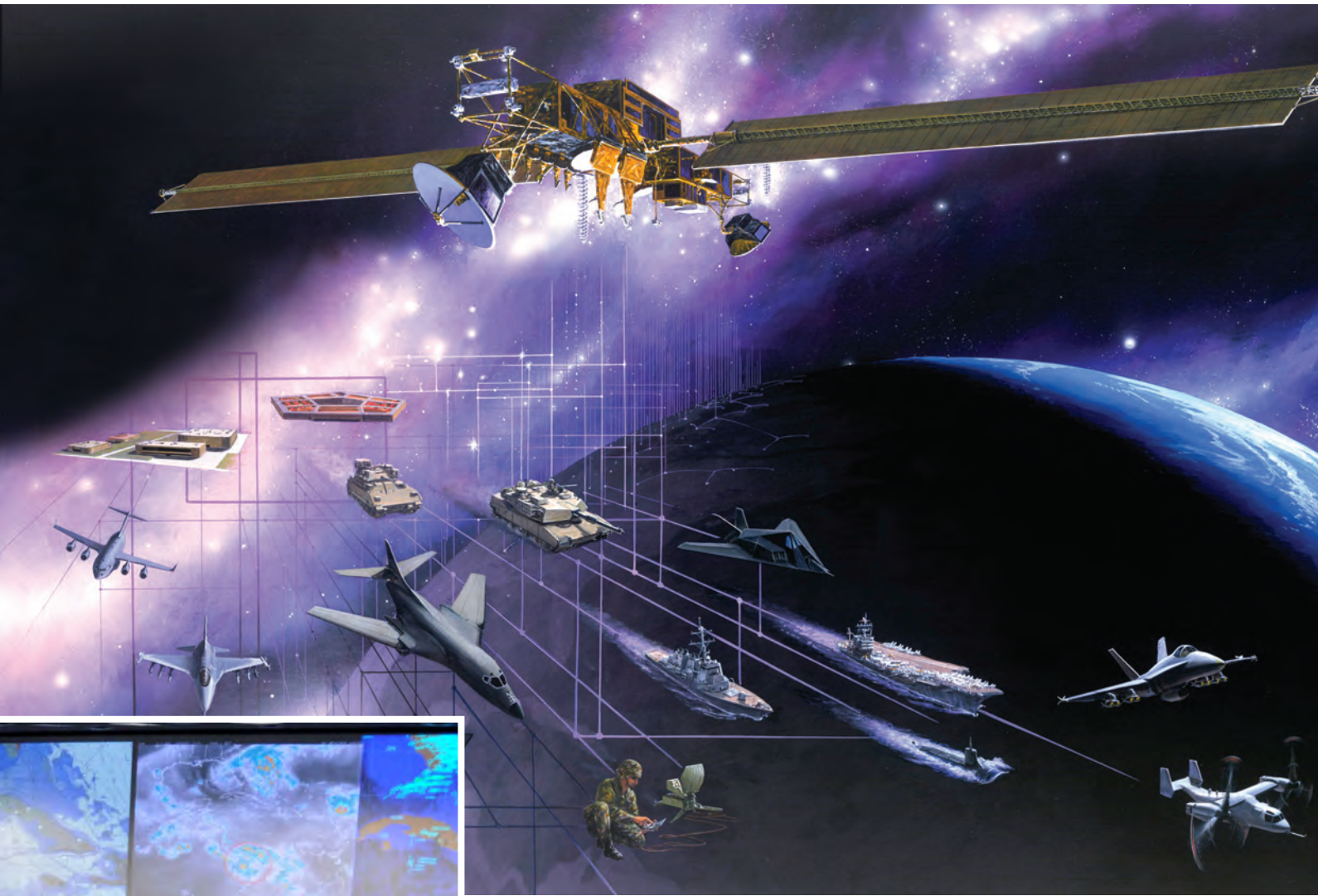
So, how does the Air Force & Air Defense contribute to the joint



**By:**  
Major Gen. Staff Pilot  
Ibrahim Nasser Al Alawi  
Commander of the UAE  
Air Force and Air Defence







effort and what are some of the challenges we face today?

For an airman, there is perhaps nothing more important than having an appreciation for the importance of a well-planned and well managed Air Tasking Order (ATO). It literally drives all the flight operations during each -72hour planning period. From the pilots who fly the lines, to the air battle managers who direct and deconflict the traffic, each and every ATO produced is thoroughly planned, scheduled, and de-conflicted to ensure target objectives are met and the various allocation and apportionment of air assets reflect the intent of the Joint Force Commander. However, as much as it is a marvel in its development and execution, each

ATO requires an enormous amount of time and manpower. Planning starts days before the ATO is executed. During this planning process, the ATO is a living and breathing document as various adjustments to timing are made, Battle Damage Assessments (BDA) are considered, and aircraft sortie generation rates are taken into account. All-in-all, this process takes a considerable amount of time and effort during each -24 hour ATO period.

As one can imagine, the amount of information taken in by the Air Operations Center (AOC) and examined and considered during the ATO planning process is at times staggering. As the gatekeepers of this information flow, Intelligence plays a critical





role in ensuring the accuracy and timeliness of all the information as it is fed back into the planning cycle. As the starting point for strategy development, Intel begins by preparing the initial Intelligence Preparation for the Battlefield (IPB) to be used during the Operational Assessment and Mission Analysis phases. The importance of ensuring the accuracy of these intelligence reports and assessments is paramount to confirming that a correct Course of Action is chosen. As part of their preparation efforts, Intel officers must sift through an enormous amount of targeting data, BDA imagery, as well as Electronic Warfare (EW) files to ensure the

most accurate and comprehensive data is available for planning and execution. In the end, high quality and accurate information often makes the difference between a successful or unsuccessful mission tasking.

Of course, not only is the quality and accuracy of the data important, it must also be provided to the warfighter in a timely manner. One of the primary goals of the Air Force & Air Defense is that when called upon, we are able to effectively put 100% of the bombs on target, on time. Ensuring a timely and accurate weather forecast in the target area can make a big difference in being able to successfully "Find" the target as

the first step in the Find, Fix, Target, Track, Execute cycle. Likewise, for night missions, being able to forecast the IR thermal crossover for targeting pod or night visions goggle operations can ensure attack windows are scheduled during the most optimum time. Knowing the exact composition and thermal properties of a fragged target requires extensive targeting and weaponeering before every mission even gets off the ground. Pilots and Intel officers painstakingly review target sets, ensuring the right munition is selected for the right target each and every time. From initial mission assignment by AOC's Combat Plans to performing maintenance and weapons loading





in the squadron, it takes a total team effort to ensure every aircraft is ready, loaded, and able to take off on-time to meet its air tasking.

So, given the increasing frequency and intensity of current joint operations, what can we do to better prepare ourselves for the future?

As we look toward the future, a couple of things stand out that will continue to better enable and greatly benefit from deploying and fighting as a collective force. With the rapid expansion of communications and technology, the ability to see and pass this shared information from the AOC to our joint partners will greatly increase the situational awareness

and timeliness of our information flow. Persistent Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) through the use of long endurance Unmanned Air Vehicles (UAVs) and overhead Satellite systems will for the first time provide us with an unprecedented ability to link sensors to shooters with real time battle assessments capability.

Overall, being “mission-ready” comes down to just one word...preparation. We as warfighters must invest our time and effort into better understanding how each of the Services integrate into the bigger joint picture. This begins with ensuring we inform ourselves on the roles and missions

of our fellow service members. Take the time to attend courses and workshops on joint planning so you have a better perspective of the capabilities and constraints we all face. Spend some time studying the various acronyms your sister services use on a day-to-day basis so you can effectively communicate and contribute to the discussion when you are placed in a joint environment. If you have not done so already, learn about the various weapon systems and platforms each service operates. Take the time today to ask yourself, “how does my mission fit into the overall joint effort?”





# Implementing Strategy



**By:**  
**John R. Ballard, Ph.D.**

Strategy is about power and power is directly related to a nation's ability to focus its resources to achieve desired effects over time. Many colleges teach strategy, some help students learn to develop strategic plans, but only a few use practical exercises to develop skill in the execution of national security strategy. Unfortunately, implementing strategy is the hard part, as it requires leaders to adapt to challenging and changeable problems under very serious circumstances.

For some, strategy is the art of generalship, for others, it is high-level planning under uncertain conditions. Fortunately, strategy came to mean the comprehensive pursuit of political ends, including the threat or use of force, in a contest of wills, in which both adversaries interact. We now understand that executing national security strategy must be applied more broadly, as it must be done during both peace

and war, among adversaries, as well as friends and even third parties, and under conditions of great change and uncertainty; thus, the extreme importance of having skilled national security strategists should be obvious.





Professor Henry Mintzberg of McGill University has defined strategy as a “pattern in a stream of decisions” in contrast to the idea that strategy is simply strategic planning. Economist Vladimir Kvint defined strategy as “a system of finding, formulating, and developing a doctrine that will ensure long-term success if followed faithfully.” Most usefully, Professor Richard Rumelt wrote that good strategy has an underlying structure composed of: a diagnosis that explains the challenge, a guiding policy for dealing with the challenge, and actions designed to carry out the guiding policy. U.S. President John Kennedy illustrated these three elements in his speech to the American people during the Cuban Missile Crisis in October, 1962:

“Unmistakable evidence has established the fact that a series of offensive missile sites are now in preparation on that imprisoned island. The purpose of these bases can be none other than to provide a nuclear strike capability against the Western Hemisphere. Our unswerving objective, therefore, must be to prevent the use of these missiles against this or any other country, and to secure their withdrawal or elimination from the Western Hemisphere. To halt this offensive buildup a strict quarantine on all offensive military equipment under shipment to Cuba is being initiated. All ships of any kind bound for Cuba from whatever nation or

port will, if found to contain cargoes of offensive weapons, be turned back.”

Rumelt also emphasized the purposeful design of coordinated actions. Coordinated actions are key for any success; implementation refers to the action plans taken to achieve the goals established by the guiding policy; it is implementation that really counts.







Strategy involves setting goals, determining the actions to achieve those goals, and mobilizing resources to execute the actions. A good strategy relates ends (goals) and means (resources) through effective ways (approaches). A strategy can be thoroughly planned or can emerge in response to a crisis when a state adapts to changes in the global arena; good strategy requires critical thinking but also benefits from creativity and fearlessness. Unfortunately, even a good strategy alone achieves nothing – execution is required to realize any desired effects.

### **The Challenge: Implementation**

Implementing strategy requires leaders to deal with uncertainty and to manage risk while keeping strategic goals always in mind. Both dealing with uncertainty and managing risk are learned skills that benefit from experience, but such experience can be prohibitively costly if gained when national security is actually at stake. Our

strategists must make life and death decisions that have huge potential effects on the state, so they must be well prepared and practiced. Effective security in our globalized age requires an ability to analyze and critically assess the mindset of one's national opponents. Those opponents often obscure their true intent and even practice deception in order to maintain an advantage over other states. The UAE has done this well in the past but must continue to hone its skills in this area to succeed in an even more uncertain world.

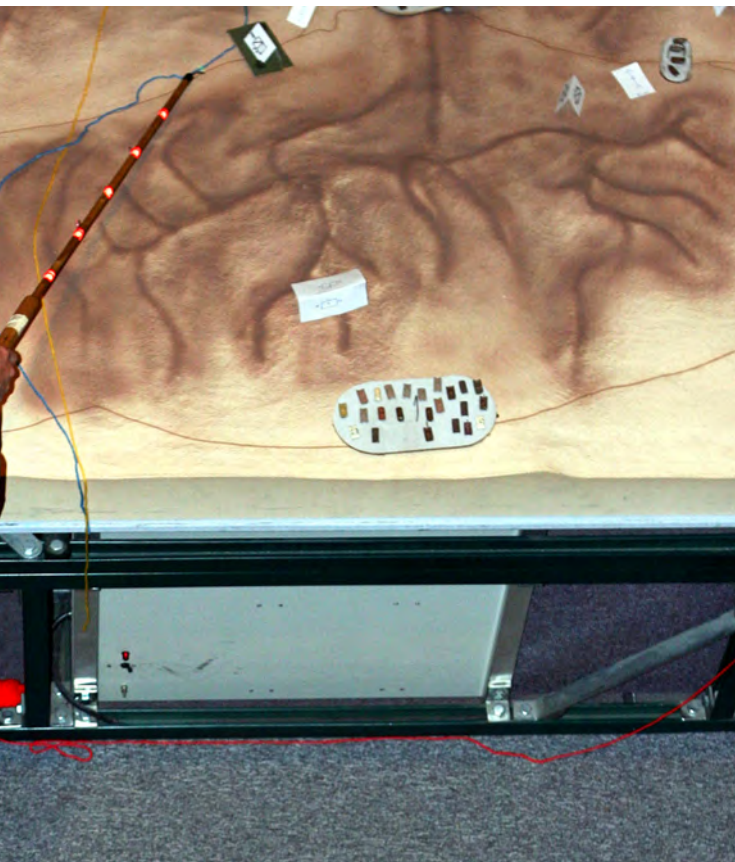
### **Implementation Pitfalls**

Three fundamental challenges face anyone seeking to execute strategy well: uncertainty, risk and time. Uncertainty requires that executors maintain their strategic approach even when environmental circumstances are fluctuating and they cannot know the future. Risk must be managed in the face of an ever-changing global marketplace where opponents mask their true

intentions and seek to take every advantage. Finally, time requires that strategists endure changes in governance, economics and technology, among many, many others, while consistently outthinking their opponents while remaining focused on the essential objective.

US President Kennedy managed extreme risk during the Cuban Missile Crisis, Egyptian President Gamal Abd El-Nasser dealt effectively with uncertainty during the Suez Crisis and more recently Russian President Vladimir Putin demonstrated masterful abilities as he steered his way into a dominating position during the Syrian Crisis. These examples should serve us well as we seek to master the strategic art, an art because it is bound by few rules and is open to great innovation and courage. If we truly seek to help nurture the nation and guide its growth, we all need to develop our skill in the strategic art of strategy execution.





### An Image: The Orchestra Conductor

Unlike so many everyday activities the execution of strategy is highly complex and rarely repeatable. Even when the strategic vision is very clear a multitude of factors can make accomplishing that vision extremely difficult. Professor Lawrence Freedman wrote in *Strategy: A History* that “Strategy is required when others might frustrate one’s plans because they have different and possibly opposing interests.” Unlike a musical score, a strategic plan must react to external factors and the actions of other players. Still, the image of an orchestra conductor is probably the closest thing we have in mind to imagine the kinds of skills needed in the coordination and execution of a national strategy.

Even if unable to play each of them, the conductor must understand the various instruments and must be able to manage the timing of each section to make the

symphony work. The conductor must also understand the effect that the music is designed to have on the audience. And great conductors must be able to adapt the music to accomplish the desired effect even under difficult circumstances. For the strategist, however, there is an additional complication that most conductors rarely face – other “conductors” are playing other music at the same time and each symphony is intended to affect the same audience in different ways.

For the national security strategist/conductor, this means orchestrating instruments of diplomacy, economics, information and military capabilities over time. National ministries all need to share the same vision and coordinate their efforts over the long term while facing a variety of everyday problems that often seem more important at the time. Senior officials change positions; world events alter power structures; opponents effect surprise and even tactical victories that make accomplishing

strategic goals more difficult...

Good strategists must engage and must challenge, not just to ensure the prosperity of their nations in an increasingly complex world, but also to help give order to an otherwise unforgiving ecosphere. Executing any strategy is challenging, but actions of other states acting unilaterally make it even more difficult; managing strategies against multiple potential threats will test even the best strategic leaders. The UAE must execute strategies well and wisely, adapting fluidly to find the best path to accomplish its objectives. There can be no doubt that the future will continue to test the UAE, but strong abilities to orchestrate national power and execute national strategy effectively will ensure its unique national culture regardless of the threat.



# Hybrid Warfare and its Implications for the Region

**“...every age had its kind of war, its own limiting conditions, and its own peculiar preconceptions.”**

**Clausewitz**

A new form of conflict, labeled as hybrid warfare, has become a “buzzword” that hardly any security conference or journal passes by without mentioning it. While the term – hybrid warfare – lacks a clear definition, it has gained more traction since the Israel-Hezbollah war of 2006 and the annexation of Crimea in 2014. Hybrid

warfare is largely associated with both Iran and Russia’s use of subversive instruments to advance their strategic objectives. Iran’s ability to employ a wide range of military and non-military instruments to undermine its competitors significantly alters the security landscape of the Middle East.



**By:**

**Grigol Mgaloblishvili**  
**Acting Dean, UAE NDC**







Alongside the changing security landscape in the region, hybrid warfare raises concerns about the ability of regional states to counter the evolving character of hybrid threats. Given the significant implications over regional security, there are several questions that are relevant for further consideration: How can hybrid warfare be defined? What are its characteristics? And, how does it impact the UAE's national security? Answering these questions is instrumental not only for analyzing this concept but also for finding the ways to counter this phenomenon.

There is no universally accepted definition of hybrid warfare. The problem of defining hybrid warfare lies in associating the changing character of war with different military instruments and disregarding the emerging importance of non-military means. As Frank Hoffman rightly points out, "The problem with the hybrid

threat definition is that it focuses on combinations of tactics associated with violence and warfare (except for criminal acts) but completely fails to capture other non-violent actions." Characterizing hybrid warfare as a combination of regular and irregular means, covert and overt actions, and traditional and non-traditional security threats misses an important aspect. Namely, it neglects one of the most important aspects of hybrid warfare – weaponization of non-military means. Hybrid warfare is a modern form of conflict that puts emphasis on weaponization of non-military means to undermine and delegitimize an adversary. What the French *levee en masse* or conscription was to warfare at the end of the 18th century, the weaponization of non-military means is to warfare in today. It is a warfare that primarily focuses on attaining strategic objectives without resorting to physical conflict, especially, in the initial stages of

the conflict. The frequently cited article of the Russian Chief of Staff General Gerasimov, published on 27 February 2013 in a fairly obscure magazine "Military-Industrial Courier" lays the ground for better understanding this phenomenon. As General Gerasimov highlights – "The emphasis in methods of struggle is shifting toward widespread use of political, economic, informational, humanitarian, and other non-military measures, implemented through the involvement of the population ...overt use of force, often under the guise of peacekeeping and crisis management, occurs only at a certain stage, primarily to achieve definitive success in the conflict." General Gerasimov's words clearly lay down the essence of the evolving character of warfare. Namely, in modern-day conflict strategic objectives are achieved not necessarily with the use of hard power instruments but rather with the application of political, economic, informational, and other non-military measures exercised in close coordination with the protest potential of the population.

There are at least four main characteristics of hybrid warfare: First, it is persistent. Hybrid warfare is characterized by deliberately blurring the lines between the state of war and state of peace. Modern-day conflicts start way before the first bullets are fired. Hybrid means of contemporary conflict are "designed to cripple a state before that state even realizes conflict has begun." Obscuring the borders between war and peace allows belligerent actors to economize use of force and to "subvert and destroy states without direct, overt and large-scale military intervention." It also enables belligerent actors to run a campaign of plausible deniability, designed to disguise the extent of their military engagement. Second, hybrid warfare is characterized by the increasing importance of non-military means in achieving strategic objectives. In



a modern-day conflict undermining the foundation of an adversary or competitor's statehood is more important than a military victory over an opponent. According to Chinese classic strategist Sun Tzu, this would be an aspect of winning the battle before the battle is fought. In this regard "the role of non-military means of achieving political and strategic goals has grown, and, in many cases they have exceeded the power of force of weapons in their effectiveness." Thus, in modern-day conflict we clearly observe a tendency of

increasing reliance on non-military instruments of national power to attain strategic objectives.

Third, hybrid warfare is characterized by increasing the importance of indirect war fighting strategies, whether this is reliance on proxies or application of military means of a concealed nature. The reliance on proxies and insignia-less forces in military operations enables belligerent actors to achieve at least two strategic objectives: first, to disguise and deny the extent of their military engagement and second, to present ongoing military





confrontation as intra-state rather than inter-state conflict.

And finally, hybrid warfare is population-centric. Influencing the population of a targeted country through information operations, proxy groups or other subversive instruments have become a key aspect of a modern-day conflict. It enables belligerent actors to work within social and political frameworks of targeted countries and undermine the fundamentals of their statehood without resorting to full scale, overt military operations. The relevance of hybrid warfare for

the UAE goes beyond theoretical debate on the changing character of conflict and has practical implications for its security. Iran's ability to synchronize all instruments of national power and to use them as subversive tools to advance its strategic objectives could change the existing power-balance and security landscape of the region. Tehran's aptness to use proxies and military of concealed nature have played an important role in augmenting the latter's influence in the "wider" Middle East. To a certain extent "it can be argued that

Iran blazed the trail for Moscow in revealing how 'little green men' could be used as effective political-military tools against their respective neighbors." Moreover, Iran's strategy of using the weaknesses of existing social and political systems in the targeted countries and its ability to influence populations of the neighboring states through application of variety non-military means has played a key role in significantly enhancing its influence over the region. Countries such as Iran that invest in the crises of others through non-military means may have a decisive advantage in future conflicts in the region. These factors can significantly increase the relevance and importance of studying the lessons of hybrid warfare for the regional states in general, and UAE in particular.

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# The US, the GCC and the Shifting of World Balance of Power

**The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is facing a new world order. The old rules do not apply and the new rules are to be formed. The center of gravity for the old order, for better or worse, seems to be in retreat. The elections of a populist president, Donald Trump, with the motto of "America First," bodes ill for a stable world system.**

In 2002, Rebecca Bill Chavez and James A. Bill (2002) wrote an article which they aptly called "The politics of incoherence: The United States and the Middle East," portending the coming shifts in the balance of power. Incoherence can be defined as "a disconnectedness, a time when old systems break down and new ones have yet to form." As the great Irish poet, W. B. Yeats once

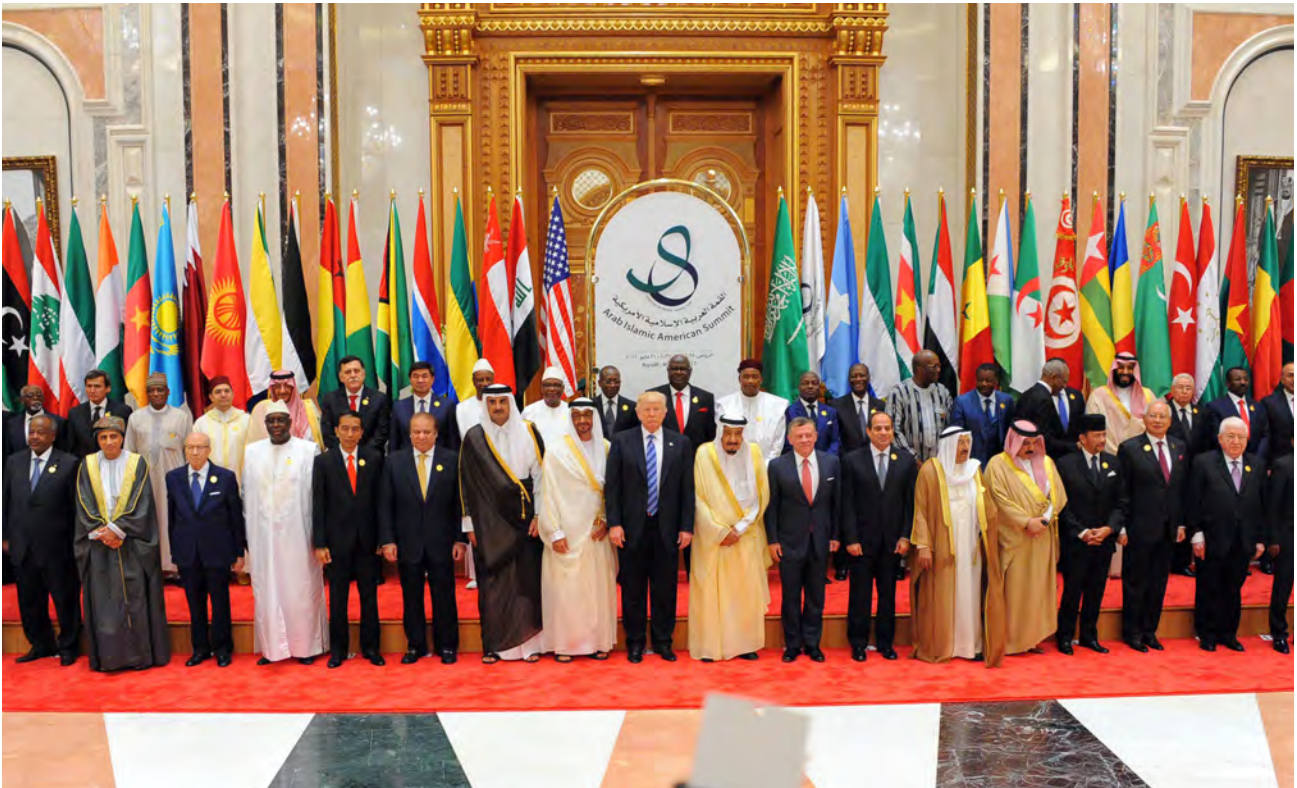
put it,  
"Turning and turning in the widening  
gyre;  
the falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
things fall apart; the center cannot  
hold;  
the blood-dimmed tide is loosed;  
and everywhere  
the ceremony of innocence is lost;  
the best lack all conviction, while  
the worst



**By:**  
**Albadr SS Alshateri, Ph.D.**  
**Faculty, UAE NDC**







are full of passionate intensity; surely some new revelation is at hand" [Cited by Chavez and Bill, 2002].

### The Antecedents of the Global Shift:

The end of the Cold War and the lopsided victory of the US over Iraq in the war for the liberation of Kuwait left the US supreme, not only in the

Middle East, but also in the world. Caught up in the euphoria of the moment George Bush, Sr. stated, "What we say goes!" The elation of a triumphant liberal world order enthralled political scientist and stalwart of neoconservatism, Francis Fukuyama who, in an adrenaline rush, asked if we had reached "The End of History?" (1989).

The victory notwithstanding, the American people rejected Bush, Sr. and elected the young and dynamic duo, Bill Clinton and Al Gore. Their election ushered in a decade of American prosperity and peace, thanks to the IT revolution and the collapse of the US archrival, the Soviet Union. The Clinton Administration rode high on the new age of globalization and the US saw, at last, the fulfillment of its liberal vision. There was an aura of being on the top of the world. The US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright declared, "But if we have to use force, it is because we are America; we are the indispensable nation. We stand tall and we see further than other countries into the future and we see the danger here to all of us." (Madeleine K. Albright, 1998)

### 9/11 and the Forging of the New Order:

The jubilation was not to last for long. In 2000, the US electorate chose George W. Bush, a novice, as president in a controversial election, which saw the new president

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**THE THREE TRILLION DOLLAR WAR**  
The True Cost Of The Iraq Conflict

by Joseph E. Stiglitz, winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics and Linda J. Bilmes

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# THREE TRILLION DOLLAR WAR

THE TRUE COST OF THE IRAQ CONFLICT

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win the White House with fewer popular votes than his opponent. Bush, Jr., vowed to get his country out of the business of nation building. The mystique of isolationism, or incorrect vote counting, carried the day for Bush.

While savoring his victory, Osama bin Laden struck, not for the first time, on September 11, 2001, seeking vengeance for what he saw as a US occupation of the Holy Land of Saudi Arabia. The new administration of Bush recast its strategic outlook from an aversion to foreign entanglement to an aggressive imperial hegemony to remake the world in accordance with Washington's worldview. (Ikenberry, 2002).

The combination of a horrendous terrorist attack and the dominant position of neoconservatives on the national security team, made the transformation, not only possible, all but ineludible.

The Bush Administration went on a crusade to eliminate the scourge of terrorism from the world. The neoconservatives coat-tailed

the war on terrorism to their long-held belief in employing the awesome military power at their disposal to transform the world or shape it, in America's mage. Instead of pursuing Al-Qaeda, Bush, at the urging of the neoconservatives, made a detour to Iraq. The hope was that by overthrowing Saddam, Iraq would transmogrify into a democratic country and an ally of the US. Iraq would be showcased as a successful and stable country that would become the model for the entire region. The received view in Washington was that freedom and democracy were the only antidotes to the bane of terrorism and extremism. The US would not see peace or security until the Middle East region is weaned from radicalism and its wayward politics.

Bush's foray into the Middle East was no more successful than Captain Ahab's pursuit of Moby Dick. The Bush administration botched the Iraq war and retreated from its campaign of peddling democracy from Humvee vehicles, to paraphrase the late historian Tony Judt.

The only tangible results the Bush administration could show off at the end of its two terms were two wars (three if you count the war on terrorism) with no end in sight and a financial crisis for good measure. As for the alleged WMD, there was naught.

The Iraq War was costly in many respects. The human toll was humongous, especially among Iraqis. The financial cost of the war was estimated by two economists, Joe Stiglitz and Linda Bilmes, at a whopping sum of three trillion dollars. This figure was later increased. (Stiglitz and Bilmes) However, the US loss in terms of soft power is inestimable. A veteran diplomat, Thomas Pickering, lamented 2003 "as high a zenith of anti-Americanism as we've seen for a long time [sic.]" (Cited in Joseph S. Nye, Jr., 2004). If the Bush Administration severely strained US military and economic power, it drained US soft power to depletion.

#### **The Obama Interlude:**

The American public befuddled





by the war and the subsequent financial malaise was ready for a real change. The son of a Muslim Kenyan immigrant, a young and vibrant African-American senator by the name of Barack H. Obama seized the moment and presented himself as the alternative to politics as usual. Candidate Obama vowed to be completely different from his predecessors when it comes to war and peace. In his presidential debate with then Senator Hillary Clinton, Obama declared, "I don't want to just end the war, but I want to end the mindset that got us into war in the first place." (CNN 2008)

The new president swooned the world with his charm and charisma. In Ankara and Cairo, Obama delivered two consecutive speeches to the Muslim World. From his podium at Cairo University, Obama gave his speech, appropriately titled, "A New Beginning." He affirmed to *have come here to Cairo to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world, one based on mutual interest and mutual respect, and one*

*based upon the truth that America and Islam are not exclusive and need not be in competition. Instead, they overlap, and share common principles -- principles of justice and progress; tolerance and the dignity of all human beings. [Obama 2009].*

Just a few months into Obama's first term, the Nobel Committee awarded him its most prestigious prize: The Nobel Peace Prize. No president in recent memory has won so many hearts and minds around the world in so short a time as Obama.

The reality, however, was that the Middle East was too obdurate to be won by rhetoric or eloquence. The region has long suffered from great power interventions, and what it perceives as foreign machinations. The hope was that a minority president would look favorably on the aspirations of the peoples of the region and help them achieve some of these hopes. To be sure, Obama in his first few days appointed two envoys to the Middle East: One, George John Mitchell Jr., to oversee

the Israeli-Palestinian Peace, and the second, Richard Holbrooke, to manage the war in Afghanistan. But the latter died without accomplishing much in his assignment on Afghanistan-Pakistan, and the former resigned in frustration.

The winter of discontent, otherwise known as the 'Arab Spring,' was the *deus ex machina* for Obama's Middle East policy. The powerful image of young Arabs, not cursing Israel and the US, but demanding pride and bread from tyrannical Arab regimes appealed to Obama's liberal sense and sensibility. The Obama Administration grudgingly accepted the downfall of long-time allies (Hosni Mubarak and Zine El Abidine Ben Ali), participated in bringing down Muammar al-Qaddafi of Libya, and supported the GCC in easing Ali Abdullah Saleh from power in Yemen. Significantly, it remained a spectator in the case of Syria.

Wittingly or unwittingly, Washington was caught up in the web of the events of the so-called Arab Spring. The publication Mid-



dle East Briefing, has made the serious accusation that the Obama Administration was front and center of those uprisings. In 2014 it claimed that the publication had “obtained a just-released U.S. State Department document through a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit that confirms the Obama Administration’s pro-active campaign for regime change throughout the Middle East and North Africa region.” The Administration had favored the Muslim Brothers as an agent of change, to boot. (MEB 2014).

The second point of divergence between Washington and the GCC was over Syria. Obama warned the Syrian president not to use chemical or biological weapons. The movement or the use of such weapons, Obama averred, would constitute crossing a ‘red line’. Obama’s shot across the bow was unheeded by Damascus, however. The regime attacked with sarin gas the rebel-held area in the suburb of the capital that led to the death

of 1400 people. The White House accused Bashar Al-Assad of carrying out the atrocity but Obama blinked (Frontline 2015). The GCC and other Middle Eastern allies took note with incredulity.

The final rupture between the Obama and Middle East allies was over the Iran nuclear deal or Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The US led a secret negotiation with Iran that resulted in the signing of the deal. The deal seems to have had very shadowy aspects to it. Senator Tom Cotton and then Representative, and now Director of CIA, Mike Pompeo revealed, after meeting IAEA officials, that the Obama Administration gave Iran exemptions to the agreement to meet the deadline for implementation. Worse even, Iran would investigate its own past nuclear activities, “the IAEA will rely on Iran to collect samples at its Parchin military base and other locations.” (Fred Fleitz, 2015). The other exemptions include exceeding

the cap of 300 kg of stock of 3.5 percent low-enriched uranium. (David Albright and Andrea Stricker, 2016).

Finally, Obama tried to win back the confidence of the GCC states. He called for a US-GCC summit at the White House and Camp David on May 2015, 14-13. The discussion over the two days was on “a new US-GCC strategic partnership to enhance their work to improve security cooperation, especially on fast-tracking arms transfers, as well as on counter-terrorism, maritime security, cybersecurity, and ballistic missile defense.” (The White House 2015).

The summit was followed up by another summit in Riyadh in which Obama reiterated his commitment to GCC security. He “reaffirmed the policy of the United States to use all elements of ... power to secure ... core [US] interests in the Gulf region, and to deter and confront external aggression against ... allies and ... partners”. (Khan 2016).





The summits perhaps allayed GCC's fears but did not dispel their misgivings or dissipate their exasperation. The feeling seemed to be mutual. Obama's impolitic interview with Jeffrey Goldberg (2016) billed as "The Obama Doctrine," was quite revealing. The president vented his frustration with the Middle East. The views Obama expressed about the Middle East were bleak: he saw the Middle East afflicted by tribalism, fanaticism, and extremism with no redemption on the horizon.

### Enter Trump: Things Fall Apart:

Donald Trump ran on an "America First" agenda. Though lacking a clear popular mandate, he vowed to change Washington to serve the US of A, first and foremost, and no other country. Neither commitment to the international system nor assuming the role of a hegemon are a priority for the neophyte president. Washington will engage the world for its interests, and its interests alone, not to preserve the liberal international order the US created in the post-WWII era.

As for the GCC, Trump expects a pay-to-play kind of policy. The GCC has to pay for security and Washington will not be the region's first responder. Rhetoric aside, the Trump Administration's policy, much less strategy, towards the Gulf and the Middle East is at best ambiguous. We are in a trial and error phase.

Trump's show of force in Syria and Afghanistan and along the shores of the Korean Peninsula does not amount to a policy. Former Deputy Secretary of State William J. Burns bemoaned the state of US foreign policy not only for the lack of a strategy but also for the absence of institutions that will help carry out any strategy in the future. The budget the White House is proposing will "essentially gut some of those institutions," that might skilfully implement US policies. By reducing the State

Department budget by one-third, "you're creating a situation in which you're almost inevitably going to over-rely on the use of force as your tool of first resort". (PBS Newshour 2017)

### Conclusion:

The relations of the US with the Middle East have always been fraught. The Suez Crisis in 1956 marked a turning point in US involvement in Mideast affairs. The Iraq War of 2003 is another turning point in the storied relations between the region and the USA. The Bush Administration squandered unnecessarily much-needed resources and showed nothing for it.

The Obama Administration, to paraphrase T.S. Eliot, started with a bang and ended with a whimper. Much hope rested on that presidency but it was largely dashed. The shift in the international balance of power was a result of years of US overplaying its hand from Indochina to the Middle East and Latin America. The US needs to restrain its power, while the Middle East, and the GCC in particular, need to diversify their risks and broaden their alliances. The GCC need not pivot to Asia; rather it should aim to strike a balance in its international alliances.

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# The Diversification of the UAE Economy: The development of SMEs



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The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has started the journey of the diversification of its economy following the strategic directions set by our leaders. The hydrocarbon wealth has played a major role in transforming the country to be a recognized state internationally with a continuous strong economic growth since the establishment of the UAE to reach 30th place worldwide nowadays. The country's institutions have been developed to manage the execution of the UAE Vision 2021 set by the government in 2010 - a vision that covers all the national objectives, and lays the ground for a new era of stability and prosperity.

One of the main pillars of the UAE Vision 2021 is to have a sustainable and diversified economy as stated; "Innovation, research, science and technology will form the pillars of a knowledge-based, highly productive and competitive economy, driven by entrepreneurs in a business- friendly environment where public and private sectors form effective partnerships." One of the engines for a developed and diversified economy is the growth of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). In today's modern economy, the SMEs sector plays a major role in any country's

GDP. The UAE federal and local governments have acknowledged that fact and implemented a lot of initiatives to support the SMEs sector and even went beyond that by providing nonprofit loans to the entrepreneurs' citizens through the formation of the Khalifa Fund. However, there are several challenges facing the SMEs growth potential in the UAE to excel and be a source of competitiveness to our economy. This article addresses some of these challenges and provides recommendations to further develop the SMEs in the UAE.





The definition of SMEs varies from one country to another. It is also not clearly defined in the UAE economy because each emirate has different criteria and scales; whether it is defined by the number of employees, or the turnover, or the assets. This is one of the challenges addressed by the UAE Ministry of Economy and recently they started to involve all stakeholders such as banks, local governments, and financial entities to have a unified definition. Nevertheless, the common definition in the UAE goes by the three type of sectors and the

business capacity. The table below illustrates the definition used by the Dubai government:

It is important to have a unified definition because it will ease the regulations and the processes by the government which gives a global perspective of the country's economy. There are many international success stories in countries which have supported SMEs strategies and have contributed to shifting the economic system of these countries to the uttermost. One of the world's robust SMEs economy is the Republic

of South Korea. They succeeded to transform from a poor country after the war into an economic giant known by a specialized innovative products within a period of 60 years. According to the World Bank, South Korea is ranked as the 13th largest economy in the world based on 2014 data. Korean small private companies which started on a small to medium scale are now among the world's most innovative companies such as Samsung and Hyundai. Such companies did not have massive start-up resources, but created a manufacturing

### SME DEFINITION FOR DUBAI

	TRADING		MANUFACTURING		SERVICES	
	Employees	Turnover	Employees	Turnover	Employees	Turnover
Micro	<=9	& <=AED 9mn	<=20	& <=AED 10mn	<=20	& <=AED 10mn
Small	<=35	& <=AED 50mn	<=100	& <=AED 100mn	<=100	& <=AED 100mn
Medium	<=75	& <=AED 250mn	<=250	& <=AED 250mn	<=250	& <=AED 250mn



culture in Korea with a new phase of growth driven by high quality and value added products. The Korean government invested in a knowledge-based economy and the return has been impressive.

The lack of the development of SMEs will have negative consequences for the UAE's economy. The dependency on government spending and subsidies will escalate in many sectors which can be functioned by the private sector. For example, job creation will be limited in the public sectors and at a certain point we might see an increase in the unemployment rate. Also, economic diversification will not have a solid growth if the SMEs sector is not developed well with any integrated eco-system covering trade, services, and manufacturing. Thus, the knowledge-based economy strategy will be challenging to implement if the SMEs sector is not reinforced to be efficient and does not have the base to grow and compete with the global trend of highly developed economies. These are some of the risks identified by UAE government and several initiatives have been taken to support the SMEs development both federally and

locally. For example, the Abu Dhabi government established the Khalifa Fund to give financial and project management support for UAE entrepreneurs and has extended this service to cover all the emirates. Dubai is known for its "ease of doing business" environment and has formed a government entity called Dubai SME, which now accounts for over 90 per cent of private enterprises and contributes to nearly 40 per cent of the emirate's GDP. Yet, the strategy to diversify and build a knowledge-based economy requires substantial growth of SMEs with a robust platform of research and development environment. There are several challenges affecting the growth of SMEs in the UAE and in order to evaluate the criticality of the challenges, one should look to the scenario of establishing a new small or medium size firm from the entrepreneur's perspective.

#### **Laws and Regulations:**

The structure of the entities within the local governments is diverse and that has led to having complex administrative procedures for starting up a private business from one emirate to another. For new SMEs, the fees and the time

can be either a success or a failure factor. The local governments' processes are not aligned and in some cases, to start up a manufacturing business takes more than two years in Abu Dhabi, while in Dubai it could be around six months. That big variance is not acceptable to entrepreneurs and it could be a demotivating factor to start a new business. Also, the fees are different from one emirate to another where some entrepreneurs claim there are also hidden costs within the procedures. Another limitation is the lack of reliable data for SMEs sector in the UAE. I recommend firstly that local governments align their structure to be as similar as possible by encouraging experience sharing and benchmark the best practices implemented successfully internally or even internationally. In Dubai, the culture of private business is more developed than in other emirates and therefore, it is recommended that all emirates implement similar governance structure. Secondly, I would recommend that the Ministry of Economy issue guidelines to govern the fees and procedures for all types of SMEs. It would be highly valued by the entrepreneurs to have the option to have their business located where they live without having to pay extra charges or wait for a longer time to be effective. Thirdly, it is recommended for the Ministry of Economy to form a federal entity to govern the SMEs sector and look after the area of improvements for long term implementation across the UAE.

#### **Financing and Profitability**

One of the key success factors for any SMEs is to develop a low-cost operating model. Despite the formation of the Khalifa Fund, and the Mohamed Bin Rashid Establishment for Young Business Leaders in the UAE, there are many complications facing entrepreneurs to manage their businesses from start-up mode





to reaching profitability stage. The loans given by these entities are limited to the nature of the business and require secured returns, neglecting the challenges faced by the entrepreneurs in the market environment such as rents and typical credit procedures. That forces many entrepreneurs to approach banks for extra loans and follow their procedures of high interest rates and complex legal formalities. In the UAE, the rejection rate for SMEs lending from banks ranges from 50% to 70% (Khalifa Fund, 2014). The recommendation is to enforce federal financial regulations for SMEs development of new businesses until they reach solid returns level. For example, the government funding entities such as the Khalifa Fund should coordinate with banks to streamline a funding procedure that encourages new SMEs with a flexible scheme for loans during the early years of investment. In return, government could grant these 'collaborative' banks incentives to encourage a financially supportive environment for new SMEs.

### **Skilled Human Capital and Innovation:**

The strategy of a knowledge-based economy depends on the level of skilled human capital in the UAE. Currently, the construction sector is dominated by low-skilled labor in the country and is one of the main contributors to the demographic imbalance issue we are facing. The local and federal entities have addressed their concern and implemented several actions to control it. SMEs in many countries are a source of job creation and innovation. SMEs in the UAE are facing the challenge of Emiratis not willing to work as employees in this sector versus the public sector for many reasons such as the level of salaries and the working hours. Another challenge is that most of the entrepreneurs depend on low-skilled labor to reduce costs and



that will not help the innovation and creativity to produce niche products and services. These two challenges make it difficult for SMEs in the UAE to reach global standards and therefore support the diversification strategy.

My recommendation would be for the Ministry of Economy to implement a series of programs to encourage an environment of establishing a value added type of SMEs. One example would be that SMEs with new innovations will have financial and managerial support to reach international market. Another example is to start an annual award scheme for creativity and innovation for SMEs in the UAE with special focus on patent productivity. We could create an incentives scheme for those SMEs who hire Emiratis and high-skilled labor to have a more differentiated range of products. The human capital integration in the private sector is a long term strategy which requires a strategic government intervention. The Ministry of Education and other local and government entities need to align their efforts to create training facilities and institutions to support the knowledge transfer of the high skilled expatriate workers to Emiratis.

In conclusion, one of the national objectives in the UAE Vision 2021 is to have a sustainable and diversified economy. The growth of the SMEs sector is one of the major pillars to achieve that objective for the UAE's economy. The federal and local governments

have employed a lot of initiatives to support the development of SMEs, however, there are several challenges facing the SMEs and entrepreneurs. These challenges are related to the laws and regulations, financing and monetary systems, and the implementation of the knowledge-based economy. The Ministry of Economy should take the lead on addressing these challenges and work closely with other federal and local entities to create a supportive environment for SMEs development in the UAE. Some recommendations are defined in this article based on the framework of these challenges, yet the most valuable source of ideas to improve the SMEs in the UAE is the actual entrepreneurs who are facing the reality when going through the journey of making a competitive private business.

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# “**Emiratization:** Is it Delivering the Caliber of Workforces Needed by the UAE for the 21st Century?”

**Emiratization, the nationwide program launched nearly a decade ago, is a mandate initiative by the government of the UAE. The aim is to employ Emirati citizens in a meaningful and efficient manner creating a national workforce to serve both public and private sectors.**

Our late founding father Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan indicated the basic goal of Emiratization and its importance to society when he said, “Developing the human being is a national necessity that precedes building factories and establishments. Without the right men, it is impossible to achieve prosperity for this Nation”. The

core understanding and belief of Emiratization’s true concept and its importance originate from the vision of UAE leaders and is clearly interpreted in UAE Vision 2021 launched at a Cabinet meeting in 2010. It cited the management of critically important infrastructures by foreign labor and the unemployment rates as main challenges for



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the strategic environment of national security. This stresses on the importance of nationalizing jobs as much as the country's capacity can take, trusting that Emiratization is a national security mandate. Hence, Emiratization is continuously translated in several governmental initiatives to support Emiratization implementation and empowerment within the private and governmental workplaces. Such initiatives included the establishment of "Tanmia" in 2001, The "Federal Authority for Human Resources" in 2008, "Tawteen Council" 2009, "Absher" initiative in 2012 and recently the Abu Dhabi HR Authority 2015.

However, what is the reality and understanding of current Emiratization initiatives? Is Emiratization implemented effectively within the work places? What are the main obstacles facing young Emiratis entering the ever-

growing international diverse work environment in the UAE? And as responsible officials, are we working on proper approaches to successfully overcome these challenges and shape the current Emiratization policies to enable Emiratis to do their intended jobs?

The starting point for answering these questions is based on my personal experience and observations in Emiratization, through my four years career in the private sector in the field of Emiratization after a long governmental career in multiple fields not specifically related to Human Resources nor to Emiratization per se.

Searching for Emiratization best practices to fulfil my assigned job, I noticed that most, if not all Emiratization initiatives, focused on two aspects: the recruitment rate and the training of young Emiratis. Over the past decade, the UAE, as

with other GCC countries, grew a competitive business environment that was reflected by fast growing infrastructure. This resulted in relying heavily on foreign labor to keep its projects and economy running. The growing economy and financial capabilities made UAE a preferred destination for foreign workers and job seekers looking for employment opportunities and better living standards.

2015 UN data, estimated that the country's total population is 9,157,000 as of mid-2015; expatriates make up almost 85% of the total population. Therefore, accomplishing the Emiratization goals does not mean fulfilling 100% market requirements of the workforce needed to run all businesses in the UAE, which is statistically impossible based on the above facts. Emiratization should focus on the building of sustainable local talents within the growing business varieties in the UAE. Creating a talent that can, not just sustain the nation's current industries and its development, but also aims to compete worldwide with other recognized expertise from across the globe is vital. Emiratization is about attracting, advancing and utilizing available UAE talents in diverse work streams. It is about creating right environments where we can apply different learning mechanisms to ensure the maximization of expert knowledge transfer and practical experiences' exposure. Emiratization needs to be the key to a sustainable workforce and retaining skilled personnel that are essential to building the nation.

### **Emiratization; Aspiration and reality**

Through my work experience, I have noticed that current government's policies are set to work with key stakeholders to provide more job opportunities for Emirati graduates whose numbers are increasing at a fast pace every





year ranging between 12,000 and 13,000 annually, according Human Resources authority. Nationalization programs were introduced and mandated within main organizational structures with different methods of adaptation and learning objectives designed to fulfil industries' own streams of businesses.

Some of these programs have been reformed to utilize the talent introduced by the modified educational system in the UAE such as technical and vocational education. This direction has been

influenced by the wise vision of our leaders understanding the gap of educational outcomes and the workforce needs of the UAE's growing industrial capacity in general. An example of which is Abu Dhabi Vocational Education and Training Institute (ADVETI) that offers pre-university education focused on providing a short period of "on-the-job" training type of learning. The graduates are then sent to the work field to face own challenges. This opens the question on whether the graduates of ADVETI are ready to join the

workforce. How efficient is this program? Are these graduates being followed up and are there statistics that measure the outcomes of this learning? Or are they merely an increased number of Emiratis entering the workforce to inflate Emiratisation figures?

On the other hand, Etihad Airways managed to organize and design a successful nationalization program dedicated for engineers and technicians where an international rotation in the major airplane maintenance facilities is mandatory to all its participants.





The only downside to this program is the narrow specialization to which those young Emiratis are exposed, whereas it could be better utilized if they were to study and rotate with a broader specialization such as electrical and mechanical engineering with a final focus on airplane maintenance. Alternatively, Etihad Airways adopted a nationalization approach merging technical educational training with on-the-job training called the "Etihad management program". In this program, fresh UAE national graduates study the concepts of

management for a year within the Etihad Academy. This however, extends another year of theoretical learning to their minimum of four academic years of education spent at university. Graduates are then sent to rotate in different departments within the industry for one year after which the trainee is entitled for a "manager title" to run one of the Etihad airport stations worldwide. This is considered the highest percentage threshold within the Emiratization programs introduced. However, with the absence of objective published

data to measure the success of this program, we might ask the following: does the manager title reflect the real responsibilities or decision making authorities? And what kind of support are these young managers receiving from the expatriate staff in that station?

Other entities provide Emiratization programs to train candidates for critical positions, however the selection is sometimes based on a criterion that does not in any way relate to their abilities or competencies but rather in relation to their social



standing or to announce increased nationalization rates. This directly opposes the UAE leadership's meritocratic standpoint and direction of promoting excellence based on competencies, skills and hard work and creates a belief among some young Emiratis that they are destined to fail. Therefore, deterioration in performance can be noticed in most cases, as well as a sense that they should no longer put in any effort, which leads to demotivation, frustration and skipping from one job to another.

While many government programs were created to fulfill the Emiratisation requirements and objectives, policies were also created alongside them in order to enable and support the Emiratisation efforts. The UAE government realized earlier that there was an untapped market to accommodate the increasing number of unemployed UAE nationals in the private sector. Therefore, it was stated that private sector organizations need to participate more actively in increasing their share of UAE

national employment, especially with public sector employment nearing saturation level. This resulted in the enforcement of Emirati employment in various segments, especially the financial sectors such as banking and insurance industries which are considered the largest private industry.

An Emiratisation target assignment, related to license renewals of the entities, was allocated annually and reviewed by governmental regulators such as the Central Bank, the Insurance Authority, the Federal HRA and Abu Dhabi HRA. Banks operating in UAE have been obliged to fulfil a 4% annual growth of UAE nationals since 1998. By 2013 the UAE national percentage of the workforce in the banking industry reached 40%. Accommodating 32% of the UAE national workforce within the private sector, 34.4% are in Abu Dhabi itself. However, since general statistics show that 98% of the private sector working population are expatriates, then how much is 32% of a 2% really

equal? (Abu Dhabi e-government 2016) (JÄGERSKOG 2016).

According to a trusted source in an Abu Dhabi based national bank, "Emiratis were mainly employed in the customer service units, retail sections, and the bank branches." However, UAE nationals did not exceed fifty professionals at the corporate management level. Moreover, the number did not exceed five UAE national professionals in the treasury divisions in all of the UAE. This illustrates that the positions the nationals were hired to fill were mostly entry-level positions. While genuine efforts were missing to support their empowerment to advance their career paths. On the other hand, the packages offered did not come close to matching the offers of government entities, which led to alarming staff turnover rates. Consequently, the organizations assumed that the employees would most likely leave, therefore, despite the multiple training programs offered, no true investment was made in the national employees such as technical knowledge





transfer or professional career development programs. This all resulted in frustrated employees eventually leaving and creating a vicious cycle. And even though in the last three years placements and succession planning programs were enforced to accommodate Emiratis within the different levels of the organization particularly at the management level, the formation of the required skills was not developed enough to reach the level of competency required for such positions. Organizations assumed that as long as Emiratisation percentages and quota targets were met, they had accomplished their goals, missing to realize that the actual goal of enabling and developing the UAE national workforce has yet to be achieved.

Many more similar programs using variable methods have been initiated and deployed, however, ultimately either working to achieve Emiratisation short term figures required by a regulatory authority or are customizing an Emirati to serve specific short-term company needs. An example of that is the sponsoring programs of Emirati students. Entities competed to attract high school students as soon as they join universities, paying them lucrative monthly salaries in the hope that they will join their industry post-graduation. However, neither were the prospects prepped towards the targeted career nor were their selected majors suitable for the potential jobs. Nevertheless, those students are used as statistics to increase the entities' Emiratisation rates.

This shows that the main purpose and goal of the Emiratisation programs, as first envisaged, are slowly losing meaning and drifting off focus to eventually slope towards a completely different objective related to the organization's specific short term needs and figures

rather than the long-term vision of Emiratisation that was expected to be achieved. This leads to the inevitable question of whether these, so-called Emiratisation programs, are truly working towards a sustainable Emirati workforce enabled to perform the intended work expected.

Today and with no delay we should sincerely work towards preparing the necessary skilled nationals that are needed to drive our economy into the post-oil era. While the UAE is driving its economy towards diversification, a pragmatic Emiratisation program on a national level needs to be created. It should be comprehensive and work on multiple pillars. First of which is analyzing the present vacancies posted in the market in relation to the available national human resources and graduates. After which a study should be done on the educational gap that exists between the targeted positions and the selected individuals. A plan for a course of action needs to be established in order to reduce the technical skills gap utilizing multiple methods, such as proper succession plans, on-the-job training programs and tailored development plans. Later on, and in order to ensure economic sustainability, a grand strategic plan must be created detailing the forecasted critical vacancies and the methods needed to prepare candidates. Universities and colleges' curricula have to be modified accordingly, as well as managing the enrollment of students in an attempt to reduce saturation of educational and work fields, e.g. Human Resources, Information Technology and Finance. Therefore, it is essential to encourage private and public sectors, especially the corporations, to align and reduce the creation of jobs that do not suit the country's needs and redirect this investment towards creating vacancies that add value to the

sector.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that the aim of this article was not to undermine the existing Emiratisation efforts, it is rather to recognize the issues, improve the program and provide solutions to problems.

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# Transition to a Knowledge-Based Economy in the UAE: Knowledge Acquisition in International Joint Ventures

The United Arab Emirates is considered as one of the world's the most rapidly growing economies. Following the 2007 global recession, the UAE made a dedicated effort in developing the Non-Petroleum sectors of the economy which accounted for almost  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the GDP in 2010 (Annual Economic Report, 2011). The UAE government's vision in 2010 was to enhance their economy by enabling development of human capital to lead the process of transition towards the knowledge-based economy (KBE). The UAE is planning a transition to the KBE through encouraging innovation, R&D investment and manufacturing development. These steps will contribute to the transition and the diversity of the economy by 2021 (Wam, 2014).



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In the UAE the international joint venture is recognized as the business entity. The rules and regulations governing the international joint ventures (IJV) are included in the past four of the UAE Commercial Company laws. Thus IJV is the collaborative association between a foreign investor and the UAE national for business activities (The Report: Dubai 2008). To direct the foreign investment and skill labor to the UAE, the government has made IJV mandatory for all international business. The reason for this emphasis by the government is the concerns related to the knowledge building and development of the nation by the transmission of knowledge and information from the collaborating country to the UAE. The common attribute that all IJVs have is capacity building through the development of a knowledge hub. The transfer of knowledge can be achieved through work-related skills and performance development,

which at the same time might also include the application of alternate management practices, skill enhancement, culture building and innovative inter-organizational arrangements.

This article considers the critical factors that can determine the long-term success and failure of knowledge transfer between the international and the UAE companies, including skills and managerial knowledge transfer. It will also shed light on the readiness and the challenges facing the UAE economy's transition to a knowledge-based economy.

## **Knowledge-Based Economy**

The term 'knowledge-based economy' reflects the role and the importance of knowledge and technology in economic development. Skilled and knowledgeable human capital has always been essential to economic growth. The main sectors that require knowledge are high-technology goods and services,





particularly communication and information technologies. Moreover, investment in research and development (R&D) is one of the most important pillars of the knowledge-based economy which will promote an atmosphere for innovation and contribute to enhancing the economy towards more diversity and growth.

The terms knowledge and information might be interchangeable in some respects, but to be more specific on this point, knowledge is much broader than information, and there arises the need to know components of knowledge that include know-what, know-why, know-how and know-who. Components such as know-what and know-why are commonly used and closest to traditional economic functions and hence can be measured (obtained through reading books, attending lectures and accessing databases). Whereas the know-how and know-who (primarily gained through practical experience) are more tacit features of knowledge and cannot be easily measured and codified

(Lundvall and Johnson, 1994).

It has been determined that a successful transition from conventional to knowledge-based economies requires a set of four elements that include: a long-term investment in education, educated and skilled workforce, the modernization of the information infrastructure, and effective, innovative systems (Chen and Dahlman, 2005). The World Bank has set these elements as the four pillars of the knowledge economy within the Knowledge Economy Framework. These pillars are:

- An economic system which consists of institutional components and provides incentive through designing and setting policies that enable allocation and mobilization of resources by using advanced knowledge.
- Well educated and skilled work forces who can adopt new knowledge and skills from foreign worker working in the same IJV or the same organization.
- Innovation and R&D centers working together with universities and organizations such as IJV

companies which succeed in transferring knowledge to their workers.

•An advanced and reliable information infrastructure which can facilitate communication and information and knowledge processing (Madalina Cristina Tocan, 2002).

### Knowledge Acquisition in IJVs

International joint ventures provide suitable opportunities for partner firms to learn from each other. When a joint venture is formed, organizational boundaries become permeable (Inkpen, 1998). Partner companies get the chance to explore each other's embedded knowledge on different fields of the joint operations. The know-how feature in the IJV is one of the aspects that could benefit from knowledge transfer.

### The UAE's Knowledge-based Economy

United Arab Emirates is one of the developed countries that is in the transition phase of moving from an industrial and oil based

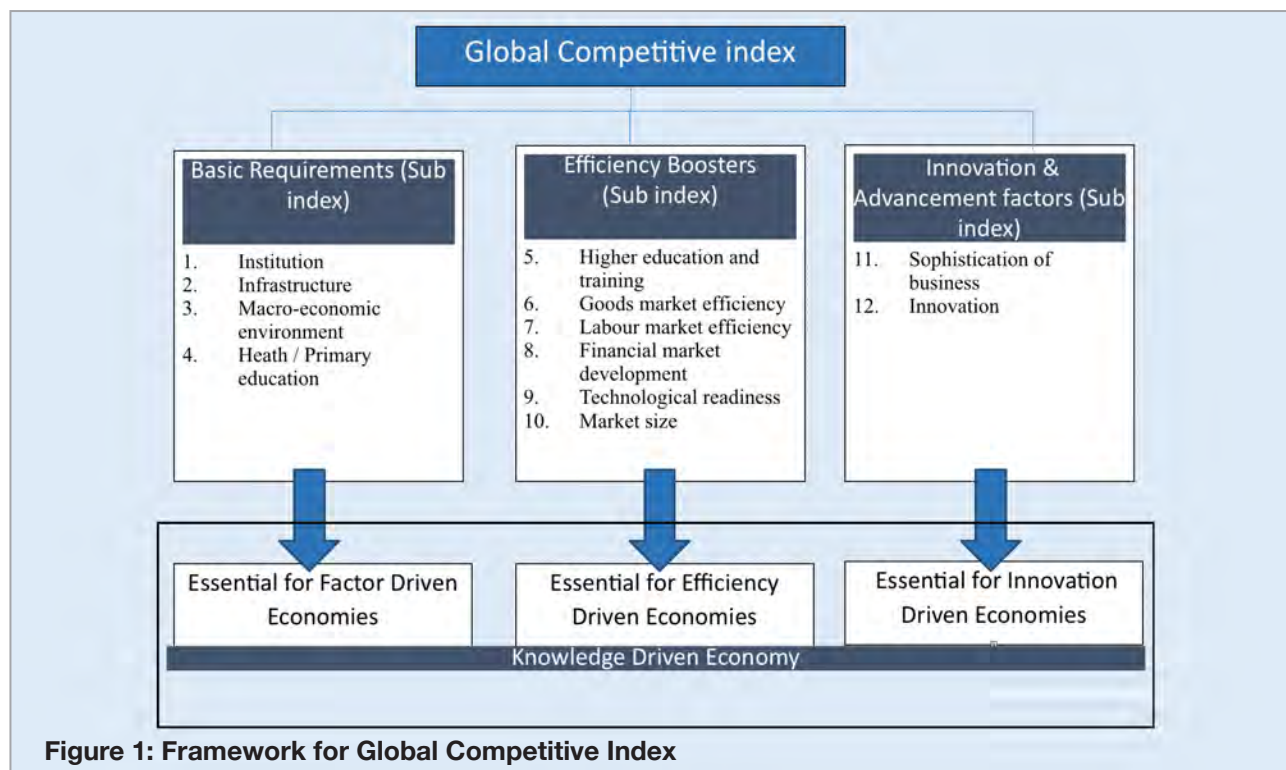


Figure 1: Framework for Global Competitive Index

economy to a knowledge-based economy, and thus the UAE has framed its Vision 2021 document. According to the World Intellectual Property Organization and the University of Johnson Cornell, the UAE is ranked 1st regionally and 36th globally in the indicator of global innovation for 2014. Furthermore, a report generated by the World Bank indicates that the UAE is showing steady progress especially the infrastructure for information and communication technology. However, the report highlighted a need for improvement in the areas of R&D, innovation, education and increasing spending on education and human resources (Annual Economic Report, 2015).

Furthermore, the 2015-2006 Global Competitive Reports (GCR) highlighted the rank of the UAE as shown in Figure 2. The various categories in the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) framework as well as the pillars of operations and the factors of influence are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 2 shows that the UAE indicators for the global

competitiveness position worldwide and which pillars that the UAE should work on to improve their position (Global Competitiveness Report 2016-2015).

### The UAE's Technology Readiness

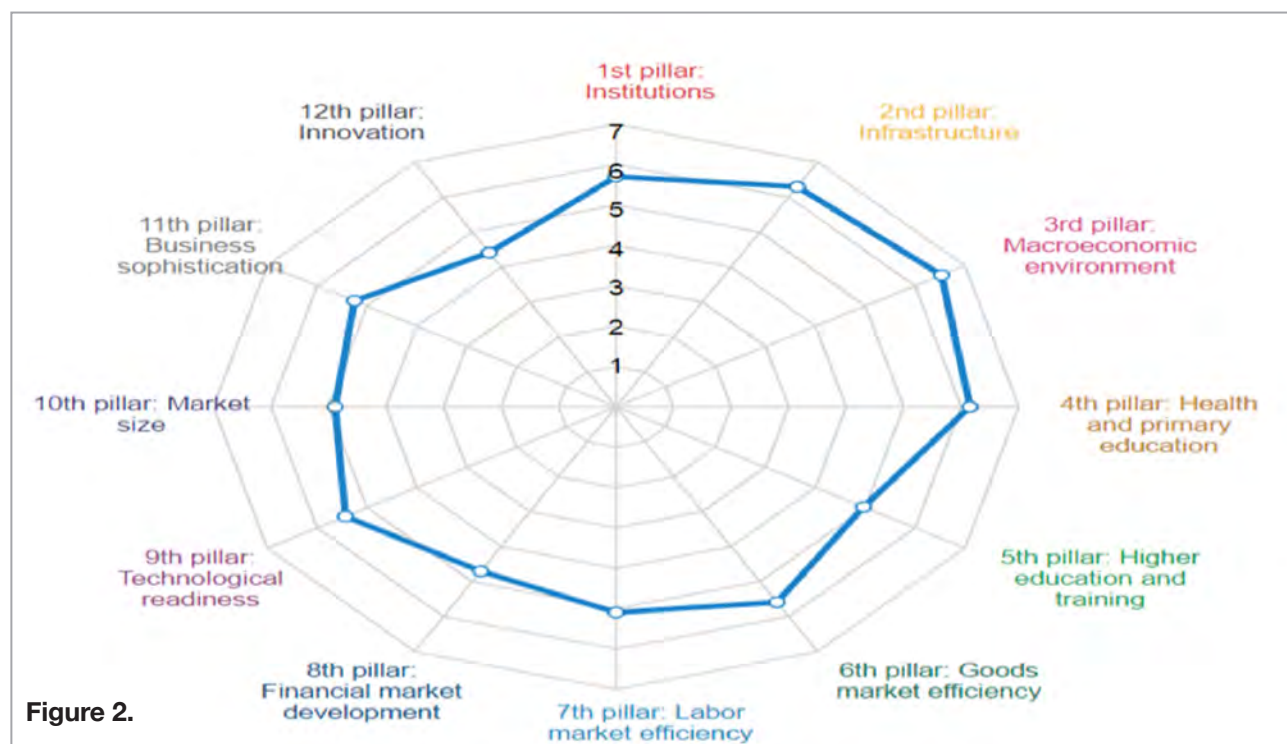
Most of the indicators show that the UAE is the best within the MENA region regarding infrastructure and readiness to transition to a knowledge-based economy. However, some indicators show that the position of the UAE has changed in the last years due to high competitiveness and the drop in oil prices. As well, the availability of advanced technologies and the ability of knowledge acquisition at the organizational level from foreign direct investment (FDI) through IJV is essential to improve the position of the country in the world index. Also, the contribution of R&D centers and the innovation awards will result in advancing the country's position in regard of those pillars.

### Field Research Interview Results

Interviews conducted with

twenty IJV managers working in the UAE looked at the relationships between company-related factors and level of knowledge acquisition. Table 1 shows the variables and the factors which determine the knowledge acquisition process considering three domains: the characteristics of the characteristics of what is acquired, the factors that govern the relation between the foreign and the local company and the amount of support which the foreign partner is willing to give.

It is evident from Table 1 that the factors critical to the knowledge acquisition of the IJVs are more internal than external. This means that no amount of knowledge will be acquired from the foreign partners unless it is first desired locally and within the learning capacity of the IJVs. Hence, the local partners' willingness to learn and willingness to expand coupled with the age of the managers appear to be very strongly influential on the IJV knowledge acquisition process. Similarly, the local partners' human capital and intent to learn together with trust between partners were







found to be strongly influential.

Many global competitiveness indexes rank the UAE economy as one of the most diversified economies in the MENA region, however, many challenges are still facing UAE strategists to achieve the UAE Vision 2021 to complete the transition to a knowledge-based economy. Knowledgeable and qualified Emirati human capital is considered one of the main pillars of the knowledge-based economy and their increased participation is vital in achieving and sustaining the growth and transformation of the UAE's economy. The contribution of the private sector and the generating of a highly skilled, knowledgeable workforce would advance the country's ranking among the global competitiveness index as well as enhancing the rate of productivity and innovation.

#### **How to Enhance Knowledge Acquisition to Achieve a Knowledge-based Economy through Participation in IJVs:**

- IJVs should employ the highest caliber of professionals, managers, and workers to ensure the success of knowledge sharing.
- Careful consideration should be given to motivate all parties by removing organizational features that decrease the flow of knowledge.

- The IJV management should set up social outreach activities in which IJV personnel will have the chance to interact more closely both during working hours and off-work times.

- Regular meetings should be conducted between top managers and lower level employees to promote a learning culture within the IJV.

- IJV managers should inspire and actively support the organization members' intention to learn.

- Priority should be given to high-quality education and training initiatives that will help equip the labor force with the most up-to-date, relevant and transferable knowledge skill sets.

- The UAE government should also give priority to IJV projects in which the foreign partners have clear, measurable objectives and agendas to transfer their knowledge to the UAE workforce personnel.

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**Table 1 : The Factors of Knowledge Acquisition**

<b>Characteristics of acquisition</b>	<b>Compatible relationship</b>	<b>Support by transferors</b>
Human Capital of IJVs	Trust	Managerial engagement of foreign firm
Intent to learn of IJVs	Cultural compatibility	Participation of foreign expatriate experts
International experience of IJVs	Communication	Extent of training
Willingness to expand of IJVs	Organizational flexibility	Intent to share foreign knowledge
Local partner's human capital	Compatible organizational goals	Desire of success in the new host market
Local partner's intent to learn	Business relatedness	
Local partner's international experience		
Local partner's willingness to expand		

# UAE Border Protection

**This paper argues that border protection represents a major security challenge to the UAE because it affects the economic development and political stability of the UAE. In order to respond to this challenge, the UAE should have a strict control in its waterfront ports and main entrance ports (airports and land) to limit drug smuggling, people trafficking and terrorist movement. Added to that, cross-border health risks also present a future concern to the UAE government.**



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The strategy of the UAE's Border Protection and associated Homeland Defense policy underpins the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the United Arab Emirates and supports its comprehensive national security, at all levels. The UAE's Border Protection strategy mainly concentrates on monitoring and enforce any activities

conducted – by any state or non-state actor - which aim to violate both national and international UAE borders. The strategy aims to organize the legal movement of people and goods across the borders, and to prevent the illegal entrance of people. Furthermore, the strategy pursues criminal or terrorist activity, and preserves national sovereignty.





The UAE's national borders are basically represented in three physical domains: land, maritime, and air. Land borders between nations can consist of different types of terrain, including desert, mountain, jungle, and urban landscape, etc. Maritime borders include offshore sovereignty zones, coastlines, rivers, and lakes. Airspace above a nation's land and sea borders constitutes its air borders. Each physical type of border has its own unique port of entry: checkpoints (land), airports (air), seaports (maritime).

In short, the UAE has its robust and independent strategy that enables it to meet the current



and future challenges. Such a strategy may need to be revised continuously to be compatible with the changeable regional and global

variables.

#### **Border security threats**

The UAE faces a range of border security-related threats,





most of which are covered well by the MOD and MOI and by using the best tools and technology. But dhow traffic and cross-border health risks are not covered as well as the rest.

### **Dhow Traffic Risk and Sea-Land Incursions**

Though a symbol of a vibrant trading and shipping legacy, dhows offer a medium for facilitating trade in contraband and the smuggling of people and prohibited items. This traffic constitutes an important and specific subset of the transnational crime threat facing the UAE. As the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attack showed, assailants leveraged the city's waterfront location to gain access and carry out the attack. This example illustrates the vulnerability of cities - such as Dubai a cosmopolitan city with busy waterfronts at their hearts, and also highlights a potential terrorism nexus associated with sea-to-land incursion incidents.

Dhow traffic in and out of the ports of the Northern Emirates (Sharjah, Fujairah, and Ras al Khaimah) readily facilitates the flow of human trafficking and illegal immigration into the UAE. Indian transportation concerns running in and out of the Northern Emirates are actively facilitating trafficking between the Subcontinent, the UAE and Iran. Port controls are

comparatively weak in the Northern Emirates in part because of a lack of resources, as well as due to the sheer volume of traffic passing through them. The number of dhows is so high that authorities may only have a 70-50 percent confidence-level as to where the dhows are going to and coming from. If this information is accurate, it represents a potentially significant gap from a Border Protection/Border Security perspective. Dhows travelling along the coast are also required to have maritime transponders, but enforcing this regulation is challenging, and some are known to simply turn off those transponders when it suits them.

### **Cross-Border Health Risks**

While focusing on border protection issues, infectious diseases must be considered. Many countries do not consider infectious diseases as a national security issue and do not consider the ramifications of an infectious disease outbreak, particularly a highly contagious agent such as various strains of influenza. The morbidity and mortality caused by a virulent infectious disease has the potential to overwhelm a country's health care system, cripple the ability to maintain infrastructure, reduce tourism and associated revenue, and lessen the readiness of the military and first responders,

effectively plunging the country into chaos.

Increasing inflows of visitors to the UAE put high pressure on border checkpoints. Alerting mechanisms and crisis response plans will be needed to safeguard citizens, passengers-in-transit, and vital national interests in the case of any future global health emergencies.

Cross-border health risks hold relevance when viewed against the UAE's current and future passenger arrivals in some of the busiest airports in the Middle East. Estimates for 2015 suggested over 16 million visitors would transit through the UAE. Dubai accounts for the majority of visitors (7.1 million in the first six months), followed by Abu Dhabi (3.5 million in 2015). Dubai will host the World Expo in 2020, a year-long event that is projected to see 25 million visitors in the Emirates. The massive influx of visitors brings with it many challenges, including potential public health risks.

### **Threats**

For the UAE, threats emanating in the maritime domain are also of particular concern, as the UAE's maritime borders generally appear more porous than its land borders. Efforts should continue to augment maritime security capabilities and address associated border





vulnerabilities, as well as modalities and protocols between MOD and MOI law enforcement authorities to respond to significant sea-to-land incursion threats. Large numbers of fishing boats and dhows present security challenges, and they provide conduits and pathways for smuggling, illegal activity, and sea-to-land security incursions.

The UAE lies in a very critical and geo – strategic location where millions of transit and tourist visitors are crossing in and out. Consequently, the UAE should consider pandemics as a threat to its broad national security, economy, and social order. It should develop plans and prepare for the highest impact of any pandemic threats using the leverage of the World Health Organization (WHO) pandemic phases.

### Recommendations

In evolving to a best-in-class border security standard, the UAE should continue to prepare for dynamic threats. A fresh assessment of legacy threats (such as relating to dhow traffic) should also seriously be considered with the intent of closing vulnerability gaps.

Coordination with foreign partners and global agencies remains crucial with an emphasis on data and intelligence sharing. Bilateral agreements with neighboring countries should be in place and part of a larger national framework that encourages collaboration with international organizations. New technologies should be utilized, especially processes that are supportive of wider national trade, economic, and tourism priorities. All existing and future systems and processes should be fully integrated at both the federal and local emirate levels.

Border Protection/Border Security policies and Homeland Security-Homeland Defense initiatives should be embedded within a broader national security

strategy framework which describes and characterizes at a high-level policy goals and objectives. And the operations should be risk-based and intelligence-driven.

MOD (UAE Army) should play a key role in terms of intelligence sharing and threat analysis in support of terrorist watch-lists and border control databases, and developing other indications and warning information for counterterrorism operations. Such efforts could be coordinated with the Ministry of Interior, the GCC partner nation entities, and/or other international counterparts.

The UAE has to develop a pandemic influenza plan, cooperating with international and regional countries, WHO and other IGOs to guide the preparedness and response efforts.

### Conclusion

Across the globe, national borders are under pressure. Surging refugee numbers, displaced populations on the move, and heightened civilian aviation and terrorism risks all pose immediate and urgent challenges. Threats permeate air, land, and maritime domains and fault-lines. They often originate well beyond the frontiers of a single nation, reaching across regions, and affecting broader global security interests. Against this highly dynamic and expansive threat backdrop sit the realities and imperatives of globalization. Modern trade, tourism, and commerce hinge on open flows and processes. Creating an integrated strategic and organizational framework that appropriately balances economic development and security priorities is a complex and ongoing challenge for any nation. It requires innovative policy responses, effective application of human and technological resources, and – increasingly – holistic solutions among stakeholders to address the full range of interactions taking place at borders.

Maritime threats are of particular concern, as the UAE's maritime borders generally appear more porous than its land borders. Efforts should continue to augment maritime security capabilities and address associated border vulnerabilities, as well as modalities and protocols between UAE law enforcement authorities to respond to significant sea-to-land incursion threats.

Cross-border health risks also present a future concern, and constitute an area where military support to civilian agencies should be considered.

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# Power of the Media to Stem Online Radicalization



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Violent extremist organizations threaten our national security, prosperity, society, values, and way of life. The UAE is already active as part of the international coalition to defeat regional violent extremists through military means, but to truly crush them we also need to target their ideologies, whether it is through the conventional media or via online social media platforms.





It is essential to diagnose the problem, at the outset of any strategic exercise. I believe that when we think of countering the influence of violent extremists we need to go beyond the military strategy, as we have seen that violent extremist ideologies tend to survive, even if the organization is weakened. An example is the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) appearing after al-Qa'ida had been weakened. We need to target the foundational influence of those violent extremist organizations. The fight against terrorist groups requires a holistic approach that not only defeats them in the battleground, but also in the virtual space where they have become increasingly influential and succeeded in delivering their messages. Media radicalization has emerged as one of the global threats in today's world, and no country is immune to its dangers. This is why it is increasingly important for the UAE to protect its society from such influence through building resilience in its community and strengthening awareness within its society.

#### **The timeless nature of radicalization**

The concept of influencing through information is not a new

one. It is an age-old concept that has been used in different areas and cultures to gain power and spread influence. To illustrate, one example harkens back to the Mongols under Genghis Khan, who realized the power of propaganda as early as 1221 AD. Although known to be a ruthless warrior, he realized that terror was best spread not by the depredations of warriors, but by the pens of scribes and scholars. In August 1221, the Mongols demanded one hundred thousand sheets of paper, where the people were allowed to write freely and circulate the worst and most incredible stories about Genghis Khan and the Mongols. Each victory released a flood of new propaganda and the belief in the Khan's invincibility spread, causing a tremendous impact across Central Asia. As a result, many cities would surrender without even fighting to escape the horrors of the stories that they heard (Weatherford, 2004). The huge volume of paper demanded shows the important role of information as an ancient instrument of power and influence in the Khan's campaign. It helped him in spreading fear and terror, and created an aura of invincibility enabling the Golden Horde to win battles and take over cities with minimal opposition.

Another example of the power of information is Sayyid Qutb's influential book *Milestones*, (Clark, 2010) whose teachings and ideas are still inspiring today's extremists. Qutb's plan calls for action to recreate his version of the Muslim world in a narrative that many violent extremist organizations use even today. From the time of Sayyid Qutb in the Muslim Brotherhood, to al-Qa'i to ISIS, the leaders, names, and organizations change, but there are similarities. They all share the same core beliefs that violence and fear of violence are the most effective means. They all have simple, effective narratives that succeed in influencing an audience

to be radicalized. And they have all managed to market complicated ideas into short, emotional narratives in which they use their own selective misinterpretations of religion as a basis to spread terror and to achieve their long-term objectives.

### **A closer look at ISIS**

ISIS is not the first terrorist organization that uses the media to implement its operations, but its skillful and sophisticated use of the media has made it stand out more than others. ISIS's communication strategy aims to persuade citizens the world over that their idea of 'jihad' is a religious duty that is necessary to restore the 'Caliphate'. Their idea is very far from the true ideals of Jihad in Islam. However, their narrative portrays ISIS as a defender of social justice, showing that they are increasing in power and that their victory is imminent. According to Maan (2015), narratives are about meaning, not truth, just like poetry, truth is irrelevant to poetry, what is relevant is whether it reflects and touches the emotional experience of the audience. In the case of ISIS, their narrative is what makes their communication effective, their key message of "Islam is under attack" is supported by their narrative which includes attacks on the Muslim population from the 12th century crusades to the modern day conflicts.

To amplify their messages, ISIS uses social media platforms to spread their propaganda to help them in achieving their objectives. Potential recruits can communicate via Facebook for instance, with ISIS fighters who would share their experiences with them, and facilitators would contact them to explain how they could join ISIS in Syria and Iraq (Farwell, 2014). ISIS has also succeeded in influencing their followers to commit horrific acts of violence streamed on social media platforms. In this

manner they have persuaded an estimated 30,000 people from more than 85 countries to travel to hostile war zones in Syria and Iraq and induced other supporters to commit acts of violence in their home countries on ISIS's behalf (Selby, 2016). Researchers who analyzed online records of 196 pro-ISIS groups in 2015 found that although the members, whose numbers exceeded only 108,000 probably never met, they held great manipulation over their members, and were able to get these adherents, even ones with no history of extremism, to execute terrible crimes such as the deadly mass shooting in the nightclub in Orlando (University of Miami, 2016). Not only has ISIS succeeded in gaining followers and influencing them through social media, but ISIS's use of media has inspired even the more traditional terrorists, such as the Taliban, who used to oppose media and ban it, to use social media as a tool to communicate with their supporters, spread their messages and raise the morale of their fighters (Mashal, 2016).

### **How can we protect our society from the threat of online radicalization?**

The UAE has already taken steps to counter online radicalization, through its laws, policies, and establishment of two centers Hedayah and Sawab, based in Abu Dhabi to counter terrorism.

Hedayah center is a 'think and do' tank, which serves as the premier international hub for Counter Violent Extremists policy makers, practitioners and researchers to enhance understanding and share good practices across the globe to promote tolerance, stability and security (Hedayah, 2015). The anti-ISIS coalition led by the US also established the Sawab center to counter extremist propaganda and messaging in the online space. The Arabic meaning for "Sawab" is doing



the right thing, or being on the right path. The center's main objectives are to provide facts about ISIS via the online platforms, counter false claims, and strengthen the credible voices of influencers that speak about ISIS (The National, 2015). They launch one campaign every month on the social media aimed to counter ISIS's messages, or to promote moderate Islam.

If we look at the volume of ISIS propaganda, they supersaturate the market through distributing their content to their diverse target audience by various formats including videos, magazines, essays, news bulletins, audio programs with an average of 38 pieces of content a day in dozens of languages and dialects (Selby, 2016). The question remains: are the efforts currently undertaken enough in comparison to the ISIS propaganda that is flooding the online domain? I believe that the key to coming up with an effective strategy to fight online radicalization requires a holistic approach that not only focuses on online platforms, but on education, awareness and society. Below are some details of the recommended strategy:





Assess and analyze: gaining a deeper understanding of the problem would help in coming up with better strategies. For instance, in the case of ISIS who have been the best in using online radicalization to their advantage, it is important to understand why and how they are so effective. What are their strengths and weaknesses? In order to better understand ISIS, one of the most important elements that needs to be analyzed is the ISIS narrative—what makes it strong? Why does it appeal to thousands of people around the world? According to Maan, “Because most of us are not conscious of the power of narrative, narrative is even more powerful. It is a tool that we can use, and if we don’t it will use us.” Therefore, understanding the power of the narrative is essential to counter-terrorism efforts “There is general agreement that there is an urgent need to develop effective counter-terrorism narratives while simultaneously destabilizing and exploiting weaknesses in terrorist recruitment narratives” (Maan, 2015).

Prevention: is key in the fight against terrorism, and prevention

can happen through educating and raising awareness within the society to protect its youth from falling victim to radicalized ideologies. In comparison to military means that are used to counter terrorism, education and awareness assumes modest costs, and the benefits of education programs will reflect positively in the society for a longer term on its own merits.

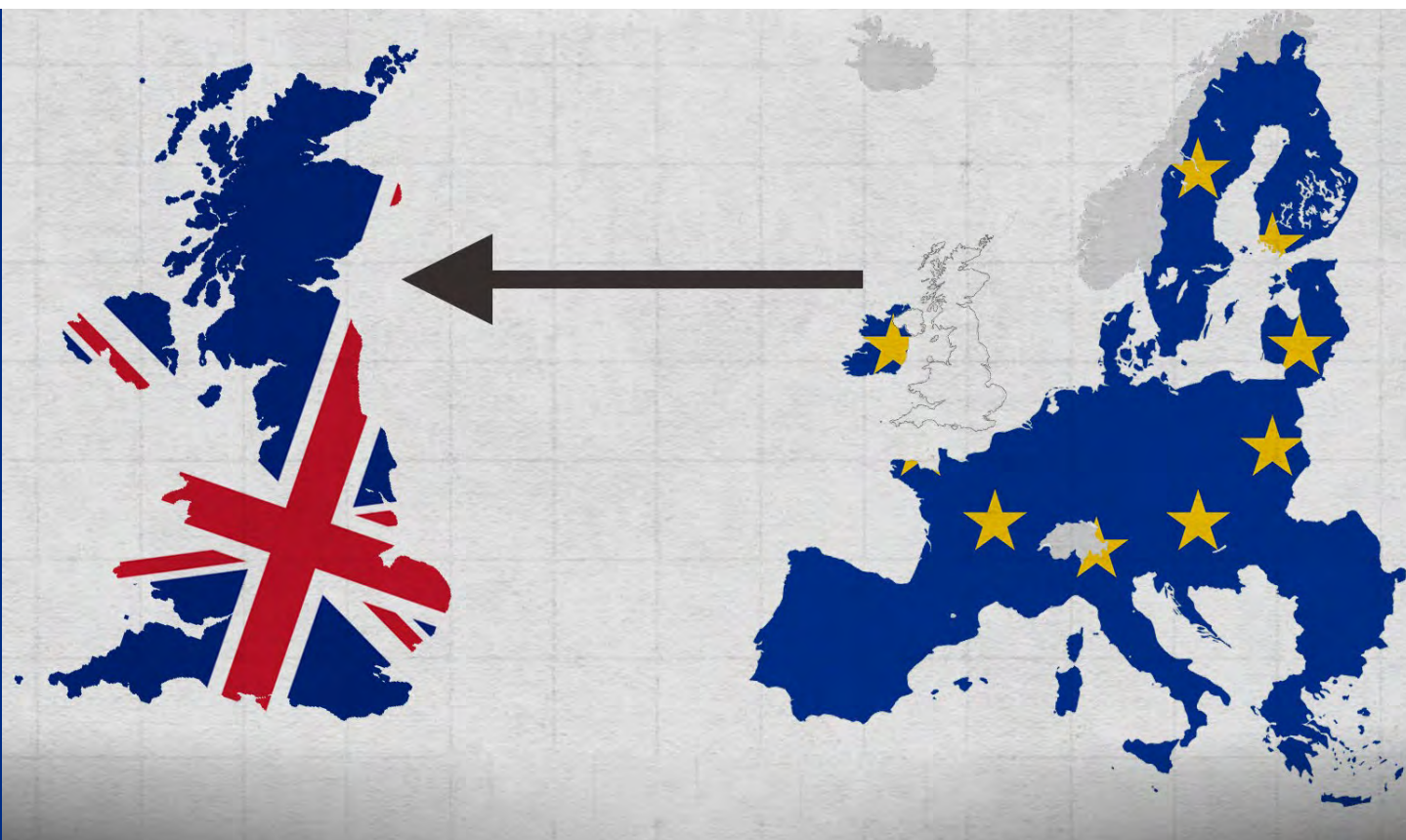
Develop and amplify the UAE’s timeless narrative: our approach needs to go beyond the current terrorist groups that exist, it needs to be timeless in nature in order to be influential and ready for current and future threats. The strength of the violent extremists’ ideologies stems from their narratives this is why it is vital to come up with our own strong narrative that reflects the true values of Islam, since in its absence the space is being filled with extremists’ ideologies and propaganda. This does not have to be a counter-narrative, it could be achieved by simply amplifying and spreading the positive values and messages that already exist within the UAE’s society.

Finally, information is power, and there is an opportunity for

the UAE media to develop a strategic communications narrative that projects positive values. A transcendent, holistic approach that focuses on building a strong, educated, resilient society will not only help us in winning the war of ideologies, but it will better prepare us to face the unpredictable threats of the future.

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# Strategy Development for Uncertain Times



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With the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union, combined with a questionable role for U.S. leadership under the Trump administration, one must question the future of international institutions and the stability of the world order. Richard Haass, president of the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations and former Director of Policy Planning for the U.S. Department of State, marks our time as *A World in Disarray* (2017) where “centrifugal forces are gaining the upper hand.” The evolving international environment is marked by volatility and uncertainty. How should national leaders build strategy given these dynamics?





In teaching strategy at the National Defense College we often think of strategy development and execution as a top-down driven process where the leaders of an organization ‘plan’ objectives to be reached and organizational means are applied to achieve the desired objectives. This procedure in an uncertain world, however, potentially has some flaws. If we think of deliberate strategy development as an analytic process for establishing long-range goals and action plans for an organization followed by successful implementation we are likely to be disappointed. This view of strategy development, called deliberate strategy is rarely realized due to the many factors that affect the realization of strategic goals. Even more significant, if we measure our progress against this pre-planned strategy we are likely to miss emerging opportunities by incentivizing risk aversion and adherence to the plan. This paper is an exploration of the strategy

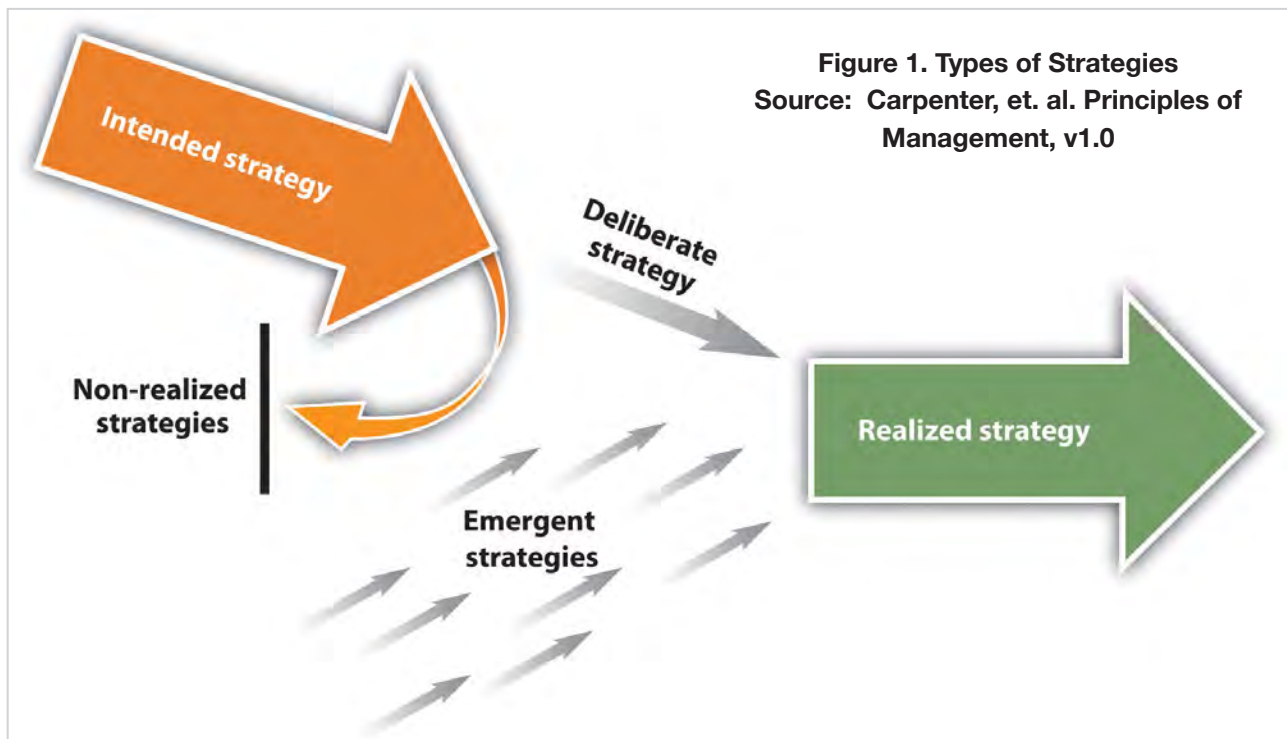
process and will offer insights into strategy development in a rapidly changing world of centrifugal forces.

Management scholar Henry Mintzberg, who tracked the strategies of several companies “across decades in their histories”, determined that the top-down view of strategy is an idealized view of the strategy process and that realized strategy is most often quite different than the intended or deliberate strategy (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985). According to Mintzberg, many internal and external factors emerge to change strategy from its intended course causing the realized strategy to be quite different than would spring from a formal planning process. An excellent example of this concept is the change in U.S. strategy after the 9/11 attacks. On September 10th, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld declared war on the ‘Pentagon bureaucracy’ stating that money wasted by the military posed a serious threat to the

U.S. Within months, President Bush asked for \$48 billion in new defense spending to support efforts against Al Qaeda, effectively ignoring efforts to tame Pentagon waste (Sirgany, 2002). In a similar fashion, the UAE national strategy has had to adjust to changes in oil prices and the Houthi power seizure in Yemen. Thus, emergent strategy is the strategy that forms due to the day-to-day decision-making that forms gradually over time, usually in response to external forces.

These two forms of strategy are not mutually exclusive but, rather, form the opposite ends of a continuum. In the words of Mintzberg and Waters (1985), “strategy formation walks on two feet, one deliberate, the other emergent.” Most realized strategy is neither fully planned nor fully emergent, but rather a combination of the two.

Figure 1 shows the dynamic between intended strategy and realized strategy. The examples



above demonstrate the limitation of planned strategy—rarely does the world cooperate with our plans. The good news is “that the degree of deliberateness is not a measure of the potential success of a strategy” (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985).

U.S. President Eisenhower (1957), former supreme commander of the allied invasion of Europe, once remarked that “Plans are worthless, but planning is everything.” Emergent strategies, rather than negative indicators of deviations from the plan, should be seen as healthy indicators of organizational learning. Emergent strategy means that the organization is taking action to respond to its internal and external environments. Rather than reflecting chaos, emergence reflects the decisions made at lower levels of an organization. High-level managers often change the strategy of an organization through the identification of these emergent patterns. Emergent strategies rely on the organization’s ability to learn from the actual experiences of employees at all levels (Downs, et.

al., 2003).

Embracing the concept of emergence is recognition that uncertainty is characteristic of one’s operating environment. Strategies designed to reduce or eliminate uncertainty are likely to be ineffective at best and may very possibly be a risk to organizational survival by not recognizing changes to the internal organization or external environment. According to organizational scholars, managers should provoke questioning, promote organizational learning, develop flexible structures, and accept the resulting anxiety in order to deal with uncertainty. The leader and strategist’s goal is not to create a stable plan, but rather to facilitate complex learning and adaptation (Downs et al., 2003).

Organizational structure can greatly affect the ability of an enterprise to adjust to changes in a dynamic environment, facilitate learning and adaptation, and develop emerging strategies. During times of rapid change, firms must continuously create, extend, upgrade, protect, to remain relevant and industry leaders. Firms

must balance the need to explore for new opportunities against the ability to exploit opportunities already discovered. In their study of companies that have successfully navigated rapid change multiple times, Julian Birkinshaw, Alexander Zimmermann, and Sebastian Raisch (2016) have identified three modes of adaptation that firms use to explore new opportunities while continuing to exploit their existing markets and resources. These organizational schemes make emergent strategy part of the corporate culture—they search and organize for opportunity—rather than reacting to environmental changes haphazardly.

The first mode of adaptation identified is structural separation, which means that opportunity exploration activities are placed into different organizational units than exploitation activities. An excellent example of this adaptation mode is the Skunk Works division of Lockheed Martin aerospace company (Garrison, 2010). The division was founded in 1943 to develop the first American jet fighter. The Skunk Works mission since its





inception has been to, “build the world’s most experimental aircraft and breakthrough technologies in abject secrecy at a pace impossible to rival.” The Skunk Works division operates independently from the main company, allowing Lockheed Martin to explore emerging concepts and string together “lily pads” of capability-building investments. These investments are used to generate technical or conceptual advances developing into what researchers Joseph Sinfield and Freddy Solis (2016) call enabling innovations, which form the foundation for a cascade of progressive innovations that drive a paradigm change, ultimately benefitting the entire company. In this mode of adaptation a small, independent, research and development organization is used to explore trends and influence corporate strategy.

The second mode of adaptation, known as behavioral integration, emphasizes bringing exploration and exploitation activities together, usually by designing cross-functional teams that bring diverse capabilities into one unit. GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) has led competitiveness in the pharmaceutical industry by creating Centers of Excellence in Drug Discovery (CEDD) to create a small competitive “bio-tech” environment embedded into the corporate culture. CEDDs compete with each other for development dollars to bring discoveries to the proof of concept stage to explore commercial viability. According to GSK, the CEDDs were “about shifting the mindset of R&D scientists and managers towards the commercial potential of their discovery work” (Birkinshaw et al., 2016) allowing the company to operate more like a biotech startup rather than a large pharmaceutical company.

Finally, some firms use sequential alternation—oscillating between exploration and

exploitation at the company level—to enhance long-term performance. BMW motor works is a company that shifts between these exploration and exploitation modes of operation. Typically, the company will go through a period of development and then sequentially exploit those developments for competitive advantage. In the early 2000s, the company refocused on its profitable core business, with a strong emphasis on enhancing productivity and administrative efficiency, and divested its losing Rover and Range Rover brand making BMW the world’s most profitable full-range car manufacturer. Shortly afterward, from 2002 to 2006, it expanded its product line to enter the small premium car segment with the 1-series and the MINI lines, the luxury market with the Rolls-Royce Phantom, and the SUV market with the X-series of cars. BMW then focused again on maximizing profit from these lines overtaking Mercedes in unit sales and profitability. Finally, in 2010 BMW refocused again to be a company to “shape the future” with the development of the i3 electric car and i8 hybrid luxury sports vehicle. They are currently bringing hybrid/electric product developments into their standard line of vehicles from small premium cars to luxury levels. To ensure that the company shifts to each priority, top executives spend considerable effort making sure that everybody in the company is strongly aligned behind the strategic priorities (Birkinshaw et al., 2016). BMW focus shifting capability is supported in the company’s vision providing both a very long-term orientation and a strong guidance for temporary changes of strategic direction.

National leaders can learn valuable lessons from how these commercial firms adapt to deal with uncertainty. It is important to note that each mode pursues

competitive advantage by embracing emergence rather than trying to impose existing plans on organizations in a changing environment. The companies highlighted recognized changes to their environment and marshalled resources to take advantage of opportunities, rather than waiting for changes to be imposed on the company. These same modes of adaptation are applicable at the state level; the goal is to create the organizational climate to embrace change and to take advantage of discontinuities domestically, regionally, and internationally.

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# Economic Transformation in the UAE: Time for a Policy Shift?



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**The United Arab Emirates has made much progress over the past 40 years, thanks to its increasingly strengthened institutions and policies. However, there is scope for further improvement, including for locking in these gains through bolstering the country's resilience to the large and persistent uncertainty arising from oil prices volatility.**

In this paper, we argue for strengthening the flexibility of the economy through a shift in macroeconomic management and industrial policy. Such a move would facilitate the pursuit of economic diversification and innovation in a continuously changing, complex and competitive global economy. As argued by Carmen Reinhart of Harvard University, the fate of countries that have treated negative price shocks as temporary, and were then proven wrong, has rarely been encouraging.

## **The Role of Ideas**

The UAE's impressive economic performance over the

past 40 years or so owes much to its natural resources wealth. But it would be misleading to attribute the country's whole success to oil, as rightly stated by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE, Ruler of Dubai, during the 2017 World Government Summit that took place in Dubai. A key factor behind the success of the UAE is undoubtedly the visionary leadership that managed to tap the country's prevailing dominant social thought in the 1970s to embrace an effective development strategy and establish associated institutions. As discussed by the

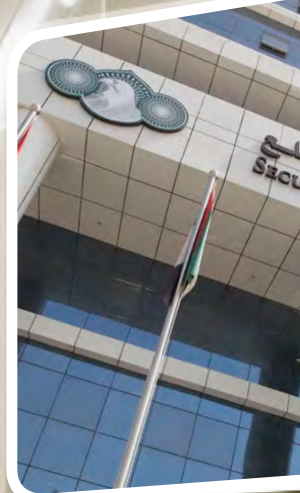




Chinese economist Justin Yifu Lin, the dominant social thought is the whole of social, economic and political ideas concerning the deep causes of the problem with a system and the options for change. It was in that decade when the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan was able to comprehend the realities of the UAE's seven Emirates and come up with the ideas that formed the foundation of the country's institutions and policies. One of the central policies followed by the UAE is the capital approach to sustainable development, through transforming the proceeds of natural resources into other forms of capital (physical, human), including social capital, the continuous adoption of new and better technologies and, later on, a large sovereign wealth fund for precautionary motives.

### **Economic Transformation is at a Critical Juncture**

Today, one of the key elements of the prevailing social thought in the UAE is the need to diversify the economy away from oil. Success will heavily hinge on the country's capacity to generate a set of institutions and policies that lead to a broadening and prosperous non-oil era. The UAE's economy has already embarked on the transition from oil-dominant economy to a more diversified and knowledge-driven one. According to recent figures from the UAE's government and the IMF, non-hydrocarbon GDP accounted for more than two-thirds of the economy in 2015, up from 20 percent in the 1980s. Oil revenue was 63.5% of government total revenue in 2014. The export share of oil was at 43% of GDP, and even fell to 30% when re-exports were included for the year 2015. The country is also on track in diversifying its export destinations. That said, there is scope for further improvement. At just below one third of GDP, oil remains quite dominant when considering individual products of the sources of growth, export or fiscal revenue. Furthermore,



this time seems different. While it is difficult to predict the trajectory of oil prices, long term prospects are believed to be gloomy, which would reduce the government's revenue, thereby limiting its room for maneuver with regard to priority social spending. The UAE and other oil exporting countries seem to have entered a new juncture, as the current context of low oil prices seems to point to a new normal, with hydrocarbon GDP most likely to continue to run at low speed for a long time or permanently, owing to structural changes on both the supply and demand sides.

### The Way Forward

Options for recovering from a downturn could include swiftly cleaning up balance-sheets, clearing solvency, and running countercyclical fiscal and monetary policies prudently. This recipe was applied in the United States and

Europe, although Europe's initial emphasis on austerity made the task harder. The government of Japan decided to hold off VAT hikes for at least three years, because previous attempts had killed the rebirth of growth.

These examples are worth consideration in the UAE given the ongoing policy agenda and the need to diversify revenue sources away from hydrocarbons, and broaden the non-oil tax revenue base through the combination of tax policy and revenue administration reforms. In July 2016, the IMF projected that the non-oil economy in the country would further slow down to 2.4% in 2016, dragged down by fiscal consolidation (reduction of fiscal deficit and debt), stronger dollar, and tighter monetary and financial conditions. Oil-rich Norway also suffered from the low oil price and the decline in offshore investment,

with the economy growing only at 1% in 2015. But unlike the UAE, the policy stance in Norway was not contractionary. The weakening of the economy was mitigated by growth in consumers' spending, a government fiscal stimulus and a boost to traditional good exports, aided by the depreciation of the Norwegian Krone.

But above all, Australia might be the most relevant example that could better inform current and future economic policy in the UAE. Rich in natural resources (gold, coal, gas, etc.), Australia underwent, for over a century and a half, high vulnerability to swings in mineral prices. Resource revenues made people and entire regions prosperous. The last recession in Australia dates back in the 1980s in a highly regulated economy. Since then, the country has embarked on new directions for macroeconomic policy and





management. The Australian Dollar abandoned its peg to the United States Dollar and the Central Bank became more independent in deciding on interest rates. The Central Bank is therefore effectively using monetary and exchange rate instruments to weather economic storms and ensure more flexibility and resilience. For instance, the Australian currency depreciated from US\$ 1.10 to US\$ 0.76 since July 2011. Adopting an exchange rate regime that promotes the export of other sectors' goods and services, including tourism, appears critical for diversifying away from natural resources dependence, in line with what is being implemented in Norway and Australia today. The UAE may envisage several options on how to further use its exchange rate as an instrument for economic competitiveness, diversification and flexibility. There is no free

lunch, and this may come with more financial risk and inflationary pressures in the short run, which the UAE is capable of anticipating, preparing for and managing. Delaying much-needed exchange rate regime reform is costly and could end up being more painful, as was the case in oil-rich Azerbaijan at the end of 2015.

But let us be clear: there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Nevertheless, the UAE's ability to reinvent its future without oil will require economic orchestration in a more competitive and complex world. Tough competition and volatility in key industries, such as airlines and global shipping already suggest that the UAE might also, sooner or later, face the question of the viability of its industrial policy. This is not to deny the critical economic role played by the government and government related entities in the UAE, but

rather to emphasize that in line with other countries' experiences such as China or the United States, the best firms rarely start with state support. The right balance needs to be struck between government inability to pick up winners (policy failures) and market failures.

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# Money and Stabilization



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As regional powers and institutions continue counterterrorism missions near and far, it may be prudent to investigate the role of money and strategic stabilization. Wider stability may help the region continue to emerge as a global power base.





Almost 16 years after the terrorist attacks of 9 /11, 36 years after Sadat's assassination at the hand's of Egypt's Islamic Jihad, and 65 years after the birth of one of the Muslim Brotherhood's first violent cells, many strategic leaders are reaching for some overarching tradecraft to counter regional terrorist groups. Especially in the years after the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks, allied governments have been mired in a constellation of contingency, intelligence support, logistical support, foreign-internal-defense and low-intensity, or counterterrorism missions from the Philippines to Pakistan to Yemen to Somalia to Mali. So it is of little surprise that scholars and strategists are looking for lessons learned for frameworks to help stabilize war-torn areas in the region (CSIS 2013).

Allied governments now have a track record of some strategic, operational, and tactical victories (Roggio 2012), even if they were short lived or are still in their throes. In addition, we now have precise accounts of the identities of the gravest threats to violent extremists: those local movements and systems (such as community council members, anti-radical imams, and other stabilizing influencers) violent extremists spend most of their time targeting in order to survive (The Economist 2012, The Soufan Group 2016). Governments are more and more turning to holistic strategic stabilization with an emphasis on bottom-up societal capacity.

### Why Bottom-Up Strategic Stabilization?

If one is to buy into the concept that mobilizing a small minority of the world's population is a key capability of violent extremists, then it behoves us to look to methods to deny this thin support. Without this support, violent extremists would be without safe haven, recruits, and lone wolves.

One likely effective approach to support is enabling anti-extremist immune systems to holistically defeat violent extremist influence and presence. Because of the dangers of just arming any anti-extremist group, who may become more destabilizing themselves,





the ideas of long-term stabilization and counter-violent-extremism will be inextricably wedded.

Operational and historical precedent suggests leveraging counter-violent-extremist systems is an efficient, effective, and direct way to reach explicit counterterrorism goals. This proposed approach—to recognize and then support certain types of immune systems—minimizes outside footprint and destabilizing side effects. It strives to attain consonance with indigenous stabilizing forces (U.S. Marine Corps University 2009).

### **The Perils of Money in Counter-Violent-Extremist Strategies**

When leveraging immune systems in the context of strategic stabilization, it may be beneficial to look more closely at the role of funding.

Beyond the mere presence of foreigners, alien protagonists' spending can destabilize. Aside from possible short-term security gains, outside party projects that are associated with undermining extremism and promoting stability can have destabilizing effects (Wilder 2012). Even when projects

aim to mitigate analyzed sources of instability and assumed root causes of extremist recruitment, those projects can add to overall instability and insecurity (Hodge 2013).

In the case of the 2001-present conflict in Afghanistan, Coalition Force spending and projects in Afghanistan are the violent extremists'—to include the Afghan Taliban and regional al-Qa'ida—top funding source. Money from siphoning off and illicit taxation of major military and aid projects eclipses violent extremists' wealth from poppy, opium, and heroin development and smuggling and all other criminal efforts together—even as Afghanistan provides the vast majority of the world's poppy-based narcotics (Thomas 2012).

The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) John Sopko stated in his 2013 cover letter to SIGAR's congressional quarterly report (Murphy 2013):

"I would also like to reiterate the concerns I raised in our last report about the Army's refusal to act on SIGAR's recommendations to prevent supporters of the insur-

gency, including supporters of the Taliban, the Haqqani Network and al-Qaeda, from receiving government contracts.

"I am deeply troubled that the U.S. military can pursue, attack, and even kill terrorists and their supporters, but that some in the US government believe we cannot prevent these same people from receiving a government contract".

In this phenomenon of money ending up in radical hands, it is worth noting that money is not necessarily a center of gravity for violent extremists. It is not necessary for them to be able to conduct many types of attacks globally. However, an active insurgency can certainly use money to further their endeavors, buy more explosives, pay improvised-explosive-device layers, and wreak more havoc. Therefore it behoves policymakers and operators to reduce indirectly funding violent extremist groups.

Besides funding violent extremists, spending during active stabilization missions to counter extremist cells can potentially cause the following disruptive effects:

Projects can exacerbate popular perception of corruption





when already corrupt government officials or other corrupt powerbrokers (corruption, here, referring to a level greater than what is the locally popularly accepted norm) receive or handle more funding (Wilder 2012). Perceptions of corruption could decrease support for formal and informal governance writ large.

Uneven geographic and tribal project distribution can exacerbate civil distrust and strife. For example, if a foreign government or NGO digs a well or builds a road on one tribe's land, it may spark competition with a rival clan nearby. The phenomenon may hold true at the national and regional levels as well.

Some analysts have claimed, amidst aid organizations and military spending focused on insecure areas, insidious war profiteering in which locals and contractors have incentives to help keep an area somewhat unstable to continue to earn contract awards.

If project management or funding carries a central government facade to an area distrustful of federal government, then such a project may have a destabilizing effect (HMEP 2012). It is wanton error to believe that growing a federal government—no matter how seemingly incorruptible—would necessarily stabilize an area given to historically local control (Fenzel 2012).

While counter-extremism spending may provide facile measures of performance, long-term effects, ironically, can be destabilizing. Thus it may be prudent for analysts, operators, and policymakers to find methods to empower immune systems without the use of outside funding—or at least with a more modest approach to spending.

It should be noted that the tired argument that jobs necessarily stop radicalization—as if joining a terror group is an alternative to constructive employment—is without evidence. The majority of dedi-

cated core violent extremists are more educated and wealthier (with more political and economic opportunities) than the majority in the societies from which they came. So, it is not simply a game of offering avenues to employment and improving livelihoods that erodes violent extremism directly.

On the other hand, violent extremists do find some support and certainly safe haven in destabilized communities that lack societal capacity. Without this safe haven, radicals have few places to go. Therefore, a less visible and more silent approach that empowers locals through local means, local resources, local knowledge, and local leadership structures (or what is left of said structures) on a local timeline may help to build enduring resilience against extremism without robust funding.

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# Developing Future Leaders in the United Arab Emirates

The UAE leadership has recognized that in the long-run, a developed human capital should be able to drive the growth of the country's economy. The UAE vision aims to diversify the UAE economy through capital investments in all sectors that not only ensures a sustainably growing economy but also creates a diverse range of job opportunities. As part of the vision, the UAE government has established several programs to empower the local workforce to take over important positions in the country's labor market. Programs also ensure the leadership development among workforce to enhance organization productivity and performance. Developing leaders creates an alignment between the followers and organizational goals, leaders are also expected to create organizational systems and processes that enhance employees' competence.



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Most of the previous researches on leadership theory examine the relationship between leadership and organization performance. Such as Bealer and Bhanugopan (2013) conducted a UAE-based cross-cultural, comparative study of leadership styles. They defined leadership style in terms of approach to achieve desired results, by directing strategies and motivating people. Bealer and Bhanugopan (2013) have described leadership as the ability of leaders or managers not only to influence but also motivate and enable their followers to synchronize their efforts with the organization's goals. This paper aims to examine the leadership styles in the UAE context using full-range leadership theory (FRL) developed by Bass and Avolio (1999), which is considered as one of the most prevailing perspectives on leadership behavior.

Ryan and Tipu (2013) argue that the full-range leadership theory identified three types of leadership styles that characterize the behavior of the leader these styles including transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire styles. Jong and Hartog (2007) reported that leadership research has demonstrated different perspectives for leadership such as attributes of leaders, leaders' behavior, and the impact of circumstantial characteristics on the effectiveness of the leader. The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the limited existing knowledge base on leadership behavior in the United Arab Emirates.

This paper conducted a survey distributed to a random sample of 306 employees working in the public and semi-government organizations in the UAE. However, using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis to analyze the data

identified two styles of leadership in the UAE context rather than three styles as expected by the FRL model. One style contains seven factors involving five factors from transformational leadership: individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence; and two factors from transactional leadership: management by exception active and contingent rewards. The other factor involves the laissez-faire or passive leadership style as defined by the FRL (Bass and Avolio, 1992). It seems that there are two leadership styles in the UAE context: active leadership and passive leadership. The findings of this paper showed that instead of three leadership styles as suggested by the FRL model theory of leadership, the leadership styles prevalent in the UAE context tend to be two only; transformational (active) and





laissez-faire. In other words, there are mainly two types of leaders in the UAE context, those who lead actively (transformational or active leaders) and those who do not lead and basically adopt a laissez-faire approach to leadership. Results of this study suggest that a two-factor model of leadership applies in the UAE context; active leadership and passive leadership. Active leadership factor loaded transformational leadership and transactional contingent reward leadership factors and avoidant leadership loaded on a second factor (Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Manual 2004).

The dimension of passive-avoidant leadership involves scale items consists of the Laissez-faire leadership concept. These findings confirm findings of previous studies conducted in similar developing economy contexts (Ryan and Tipu 2013).

This paper also showed that the prevailing leadership style in the UAE context tends to be less transformational and more on

the laissez-faire/avoidant style of leadership. Compared with established norms of the FRL leadership model based on the large population of respondents mainly drawn from a North American or European context, the responses obtained from participants in this study were significantly lower on transformational leadership and significantly higher on passive leadership than the existing FRL leadership model norms. In terms of the dominant leadership style in the UAE context, it was found that passive leadership was far more prevalent in this context than the levels reported across other parts of the world as reported in the FRL leadership model norms (Avolio 2010). The simple two factor model of leadership indicated in this study might be explained by a combination of possible causes including the lack of leadership competency among leaders who tend to adopt more passive or avoidant leadership styles.

The findings of this paper indicate that leadership might

have a different meaning in the UAE context than what is found in studies on leadership using the FRL model in the North American or Western context. However, the findings of this study are not new as similar results were found in previous studies in non-Western contexts. Ryan and Tipu (2013) argue that “few studies in the existing literature identified a two-factor model instead of three-factor model identified by the FRL model and the results of their study support the argument that a two-factor model of the FRL model may be valid and theoretically appropriate model for understanding leadership styles in certain specific contexts”.

Another key result from this study is that compared to the norms obtained from the application of the FRL model of leadership in Western contexts, the leadership styles in the UAE context tend to be significantly lower than the norms on the transformational leadership and significantly higher than the reported norms about laissez-faire





style of leadership.

This is an observation that calls for further research to explore what internal organizational factors or external socio-cultural of institutional factors might be responsible for this situation. Internal human resource management could cause these practices such as ineffective personnel recruitment and selection practices within organizations or external factors related to poor education or training or lack of effective leadership development opportunities.

On the other hand, the transactional dimension of leadership seems to be absent or embedded in the transformational style in the UAE context. In other words, in this context, there are either leaders who lead actively or leaders who do not lead (passive), with the latter group being much more prevalent in the UAE context than the established FRL model norms in international contexts. This indicates that more investment in leadership development is

called for in the UAE context. This investment is necessary to promote the adoption of transformational (active) leadership style among leaders at all levels given the well-established benefits of this leadership style in the literature including its positive effects on organization performance as demonstrated by the results of this paper.

The implications of this study's findings on theory, practices, and policymaking are providing a roadmap for organizations to put more concern on developing leadership and boosting human capital development in the UAE and similar contexts. So, this study can also potentially serve as a guide to the much-needed shift from transactional leadership style to transformational leadership, to retain successful human capital resources in the government sector of the UAE. The current UAE leadership styles identified in this study may serve as a basis of reference for future research on leadership theory in the UAE and

other GCC countries.

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# The Defense of Cultural Heritage: a New Issue of the Global Agenda

In late 2012, Islamist insurgents in Mali seized control of huge parts of the northern regions in the country. Along their territorial conquest, terrorist organizations such as Ansar ad-Din, started targeting monuments such as

mausoleums, mosques and cemeteries in Timbuktu – a center of Islamic civilization from the 13th to the 17th centuries. The leader of the group, Abu Dardar, then declared “Not a single mausoleum will remain in Timbuktu”.





In 2013 the so-called Islamic State (IS) launched its own campaign of devastation across Iraq and Syria. In the Iraqi city of Mosul, the mosque of Nabi Yunus and the shrine of Imam Awn al Din were destroyed among many other

monuments. Similarly, churches and Sufi shrines were systemically targeted by militants. In Syria, soon the ancient city of Palmyra became the victim of IS attacks, with the demolition of many statues and temples.

The destruction of Palmyra, the “irreplaceable treasure” as French historian Paul Veyne called it, provoked shock and outrage in the international community. Timbuktu, Mosul, Palmyra had been part of our universal heritage, relics of a distant past that in some cases are now gone. The UNESCO Director-General depicted the IS destructions as “a form of cultural cleansing”. As a result, these waves of attacks raised a critical issue: the defense of cultural heritage against terrorist fanaticism.

### **The French-Emirati Cooperation and the Abu Dhabi Conference**

In early 2015, a new initiative to tackle this challenge started with two countries at its forefront: the United Arab Emirates and France. These countries had been active for years in the two fields of cultural diplomacy and counterterrorism and they were now joining forces to raise the global awareness on the defense of cultural heritage across the world.

At the Ise-Shima G7 Summit in Japan in May 2016, the principles of the French-Emirati initiative were announced: an international conference on safeguarding



endangered cultural heritage would be convened before the end of the same year and an international fund to sponsor specific programs would be created. Two objectives were driving the efforts of Paris and Abu Dhabi: better safeguarding cultural property under the threat from belligerents and preserving the cultural diversity which was being systematically targeted by terrorist groups.

France and the UAE appointed two personal representatives of their heads of state to prepare the coming conference: Jack Lang, President of the Paris-based Arab World Institute and Mohamed Al Mubarak, Chairman of Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority. In only a few months, they would organize what became the Abu Dhabi conference that took place on the 2nd and 3rd of December 2016 with forty participating states. In the Abu Dhabi Declaration signed at the end of the conference, all heads of state declared their “common determination to safeguard the endangered cultural heritage of all peoples, against its destruction and illicit trafficking”.

### **The Creation of the International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas**

The conference paved the way in early 2017 for the creation of a specific fund to support the efforts. The new organization was named the International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas (ALIPH). As the drivers of the initiative, France and the UAE are the biggest donors so far: they respectively pledged donations of \$30 million dollars and \$15 million dollars. Additionally, Saudi Arabia offered \$20 million dollars, Kuwait \$5 million dollars, Luxembourg 3 million Euros, Morocco \$1.5 million dollars and the American entrepreneur and philanthropist Thomas Kaplan \$1 million dollars. The fund will support programs that cover



the “entire heritage chain”: prevention by training and implementing emergency safeguarding plans; emergency protection during the conflicts; conservation and restoration of artworks following conflicts. Italy offered as well its expertise to train police, curators and restorers.

At the same time, the French-Emirati initiative also created a complex and ambitious international network of safe havens for endangered cultural property. The idea was to build temporary safe havens for emergency transfers of cultural

goods if a country considers that they are under immediate threat. Such actions have already occurred in past conflicts. In early 1939, as the civil war escalated in Spain, artworks from the famous Prado Museum were moved to Switzerland where they stayed until the conflict reached its conclusion. Likewise, Switzerland also provided safe haven to the Afghanistan “Museum-in-Exile” from 1999 to 2007. Today, China announced in response to the Abu Dhabi Declaration that it would be the first Asian country to offer its support by making the China





National Museum a safe haven able to host temporarily material culture threatened by an ongoing conflict.

### Lessons Learned from the Case Study

In that perspective, it is worth considering the initial achievements that the French-Emirati initiative reached in only one year of its existence. This initiative already constitutes a case study worth considering for scholars and practitioners of strategy. It first reminds us the intrinsic ties that bind culture, heritage and national

security. What is at stake with mausoleums, shrines or temples goes beyond the mere history of art: it touches upon our past, our identities. It echoes the words of the late Sheikh Zayed who famously said, “a nation without a past is a nation without a present or a future”.

Second, the French-Emirati initiative emphasizes the multidimensional nature of counter-terrorism efforts. The UAE already plays a key role in the field of countering the ideological support to terrorist propaganda as it hosts the headquarters of Hedayah, an

international center for expertise to counter violent extremism. Similarly, the location of Abu Dhabi for the French-Emirati conference was symbolic: the city that would host from 2017 the Louvre-Abu Dhabi – a universal museum dedicated to the exchange between artworks and sculptures from around the globe – was an obvious symbol to the spirit of the conference.

Finally, this initiative is a precious case study to appraise diplomatic tradecraft: it displays how two close allies, France and the UAE, can join forces on a common cause consistent with their national security and design a strategy to put the issue on the global agenda through the organization of an international conference and the creation of a new organization, ALIPH.

There are of course many challenges ahead for this enterprise: maintaining global awareness, sustaining the level of financial support, establishing a sufficient number of safe havens, as well as training curators and security forces to work together. Given the efforts already made over the last year by the organizers, it will be worth monitoring the developments of this project in the coming months.

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# Forecast of US Policy in the Middle East in 2017

With the completion of US President Trump's first one hundred days in office I want to forecasts what to expect from the Trump administration in the Middle East in 2017. My analysis is based on an understanding of the US system of checks and balances, US

interests in the Middle East and an understanding of the Trump administration's views of threats, challenges and opportunities to US strategic interests. I give the following four predictions for 2017:

- No significant U.S. support for the coalition's effort against the





Houthi-Saleh alliance in Yemen, but a less hardline stance

- Increased rhetoric against malign Iranian activities, but no re-negotiation of P5+1
- No demand of payment for U.S. security guarantees in the Gulf, but pressure to contribute more in Syria and Iraq
- 2017 will be the best year to engage the new administration on Middle East policy

#### **US support for Yemen**

On January 29, just nine days after President Trump's inauguration, a U.S. commando was killed in an operation against al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in central Yemen. While the operation had been planned for months, it was the first known operation where a U.S. serviceman, Navy SEAL Ryan Owen, was killed in combat during Trump's presidency. While the operation was planned under the Obama administration, it was Trump's administration that authorized the attack. President Trump has insisted the fight against

radical militant Islamists will be a top priority for his administration. The U.S. operation in Yemen was an opportunity to demonstrate this resolve. In fact, since the presidential inauguration on January 21 U.S. has increased its counter-terrorism efforts in Yemen and has had a less hardline policy against the Saudi-led coalition's efforts than before. It is important to distinguish, though, that Trump's main objective in increasing U.S. support in Yemen is to degrade and defeat al-Qaeda and possibly gain more leverage with GCC countries to get more involved in Syria and Iraq, not necessarily to increase efforts against Iranian-backed Houthi militants. While there are overlapping interests between the U.S. and the Saudi-led efforts against Houthi militants in Yemen, in particular to stop Iranian destabilizing behavior in the Middle East, each country has different strategic priorities in Yemen. As expected, the new administration has not been as critical of the

Saudi-led coalition in Yemen as the previous administration was and has eased intelligence and logistics support to the Saudi-led coalition that was being cut by the previous administration. However, due to the costs and risks associated with increasing US military support to defeat the Houthi-Saleh alliance, it is unlikely the Trump administration will commit U.S. troops or other combat assets to that effort this year. The administration will likely continue to focus on the al-Qaeda threat, despite being less critical of the Saudi-led coalition and increasing its rhetoric against Iranian expansionism.

#### **Increased rhetoric against Iran, but no new P5+1 deal**

Since coming to power, the new Trump administration has increased U.S. rhetoric against Iran, which departed from the Obama administration's more diplomatic approach. In early February former U.S. National Security Adviser Michael Flynn put Iran «on notice» after an Iranian missile test and a



Houthi attack on a Saudi warship in Yemen. Additionally, after the Syrian regime's chemical attack in Khan Sheikhoun in Northern Syria in April, the Trump administration has considered introducing new sanctions against Russia and Iran. While the Trump administration authorized a U.S. cruise missile attack against Syrian military assets in response to the chemical attack, the U.S. interest in this response was linked to its policy of non-proliferation rather than a policy of weakening an Iranian-backed regime. However, despite the noticeable increase in the administration's rhetoric against Iranian behavior, there is no indication the P5+1 nuclear deal with Iran will be renegotiated. U.S. relations with Russia would be key in that effort and the Trump administration's policy to improve relations with Russia is being challenged by the U.S. sys-

tem of checks and balances as well as U.S. policy towards Russia after the Khan Sheikhoun attack. While the P5+1 deal will likely not be renegotiated during 2017, it is possible that the U.S. Congress will introduce legislation for new sanctions against Iran's missile program and other malign activities in the region, as the Trump administration did at the beginning of February after the Iranian missile test.

**No demand for payment from Gulf allies, but pressure to support in Syria and Iraq**

During the U.S. presidential campaign, Donald Trump promised to get U.S. allies to pay for or share more of the burden of providing regional and international security. What this means is President Trump wants U.S. allies in the region to do more and be more effective at defeating Daesh. These campaign



promises made many in the region wonder what this might mean for U.S. allies in the Arabian Gulf. For the new U.S. administration it is safe to assume that the idea of burden sharing for regional security is directly linked to the fight against terrorism, especially in Syria and Iraq. It is not surprising that soon after Trump's inauguration he asked King Salman of Saudi Arabia in their first phone conversation to increase cooperation in the fight against Daesh in Iraq and Syria. It was in this and other conversations he had with other Arab leaders, such as Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed, that Trump solicited their support for creating safe zones in Syria. This request for more Arab support in the fight against Daesh is Trump's way of fulfilling those campaign promises to have regional allies pay





for or share more of the burden of providing security in the region.

The new administration will deepen its ties and support to countries that are playing an active role in sharing the burden of counter-terrorism operations in the region. In fact, the administration's increased counter-terrorism efforts in Yemen, which are done in close coordination with UAE forces, and a less hardline stance for the Saudi-led coalition against the Iranian-backed Houthi militants could be a tactic the administration is using to increase leverage for the campaign against Daesh in Syria and Iraq. Those regional allies who increase their support against terrorism will gain influence with the new administration. The UAE has played an instrumental role against terrorism in both Yemen and Syria and these UAE efforts

are appreciated and noticed in Washington. UAE leadership and active contribution as a coalition partner in regional security operations have helped the UAE become the benchmark of the type of ally the new U.S. administration seeks in the region. In 2017 the UAE is the Arab country most able to influence the new administration's policies in the Middle East due to its persuasive and coercive capabilities to fight terror, bring regional stability and provide hope for the future.

#### **2017 as the best year to engage the new administration**

I summarize my forecasts for 2017 with the Arabic saying *fi alta'anni assalama wa fi alajila alnadama* (there is safety in deliberation and regret in haste), meaning that in terms of how to deal with the Trump administration, 2017 is a year best for deliberation

and not hasty policy decisions. This year the Trump administration will continue to assess the threats, challenges and opportunities to advance U.S. interests in the region and will consult with its most trusted partners, as it has done with UAE officials. While President Trump remains an unpredictable leader and there is uncertainty about what policies his administration will adopt for the Middle East, a correct understanding of the U.S. system of checks and balances, a correct assessment of U.S. interests in the region and correct assumptions about the world view of Trump administration officials can give a clearer sense of what to expect from President Trump in the Middle East in 2017.

# The Role of the Predominately Shia Popular Mobilization Forces

The role of the predominately Shia Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF)/ al-Hashd al-Shaabi in Iraq is to counter the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS). After IS swept eastwards through Syria, capturing Mosul, the Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani, Iraq's senior Shia cleric, issued a fatwa invoking Iraqis to fight the self-described Islamic State. The PMF are problematic in the context of Iraqi and regional politics. While they have played an important role in the counter-IS/Daesh conflict, their sectarian orientation makes them perceived as an Iranian incursion.



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The idea of the PMF is not new. During the Iraq-Iran war (1980-88), the IRGC established the Badr Corps/Organization, perhaps the most prominent Iranian proxy, and other PMF Iraqi militias to fight Saddam Hussain's regime. Most sources estimate PMF units at forty (The Economist 2015), whereas Al Zaabi (2017) approximates around seventy-two PMF militias. Rawabet Center for Research and Strategic Studies (2016) puts the number at sixty-seven. However, H.E. Al-Alusi claims that the PMF amount to a mere handful.

Though most Arabian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states support and participate in the IS

campaign, the structure, discourse, behavior and external links of the PMF raise GCC states' suspicions and concerns. In fact, the PMF's rise has caused GCC decisionmakers to reframe their Iraq policies. From a GCC strategic perspective, the PMF pose threats to GCC security, collectively and individually, and represent a destabilizing force in Iraq and the region as a whole.

## **PMF's Threats to GCC States:**

The GCC states unilaterally oppose the rise of IS. In particular, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Bahrain, have participated actively in the US-led coalition against IS since





its September 2014 launch. The UAE even offered to airstrike Daesh targets. Nevertheless, the incorporation of the predominantly-Shia PMF into the IS/Daesh conflict necessitates a firm GCC stance. Firstly, GCC states need to uphold the legitimate state monopoly over violence, unlike these PMF units which might be integrated into the formal security units at some stage (Roggio 2015; Beydoun & Zahawi, 2016). More importantly, the PMF's actions provoke GCC states' apprehensions regarding this al-Hashd phenomenon. Hence, the question arises, "What threats do the PMF pose to GCC security?"

### 1. The Threat of PMF's External Links:

Most PMF factions are related officially and ideologically with Iran, with their leaders aligned to Iran's regional interests (Future 2016, Rawabet 2016). Ideologically their shared long-term strategic vision is the Shia faith, protecting Shia holy sites and Shia Muslims in their resistance to US and Sunni states' influence in the region. Another objective is the export of Iran's Islamic Revolution (Ardemagni 2016). Key PMF leaders openly espouse their ideology as promoting Iran's brand of Islamic identity (Roggio and Toumaj 2016). According to Professor Muhittin

Ataman (2016) with Yıldırım Beyazıt University, non-Iranian Shia groups across the Middle East no longer profess loyalty to their national political leaderships, but to the Iranian religious authorities.

Iran's supreme leader Ali Khamenei describes the PMF as "a great wealth, a major resource for today and the future of Iraq," which "should be supported and consolidated" (Roggio and Toumaj 2016). Iranian PMF support ranges from the production and distribution of propaganda, training and advising, financial support, armaments, and diplomatic support, all mainly handled by the IRGC (Future 2016, Robinson



39 ,2016). Tehran has also long cultivated strong relations with the Shia leaders now in charge of PMF factions. For example, Hadi Al-Amiri fought alongside Iran during the Iran-Iraq War and is a close friend of Qassem Soleimani, the commander of Iran's Quds Force, an elite branch of the IRGC responsible for asymmetric warfare beyond Iran's borders. He has been accused of overseeing flights of Iranian weapons shipments headed to Syria (Kalian 2016; Anderson 2016).

Iran sees the PMF as an Iraqi version of the IRGC (Cordesman 8-56 ,2016); parallel to the Iraqi army thereby projecting Iranian influence in Iraq and beyond. Tehran also wants the Iraqi Government to bear the costs of arming and paying for this force (al-Rashed 2017). In fact, leading Iraqi Shia groups envisage the PMF as a permanent revolutionary guard, similar to the IRGC, protecting Shia dominance in the state against future threats (Knights 56 ,2016).

Iranian and Lebanese Hezbollah military trainers are heavily engaged in training elements of PMF militias (Knights 53 ,2016). Iranian combat advisors often appear on the battlefield aiding PMF (Anderson 2016). Iran is co-ordinating PMF fighting against IS, notably Qassem Soleimani (The Economist 2015a).

who played a leading role in the battle for Tikrit in March 2015 (Cordesman 8-56 ,2014). Iran has even launched airstrikes supporting the PMF militias fighting in northern Iraq (The Economist 2015a).

The rise of the PMF unnervingly mirrors Hezbollah's ascent in Lebanon. There are parallels between how Hezbollah and PMF factions use politics, foreign influence, and propaganda to increase their power. Similarly, Iraqi PMF imitate Hezbollah by sidelining any non-Iranian-backed Shiite groups or figures, such as happened with the Amal movement (Kalian 2016). Thus with the help of former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, their greatest backer, the PMF accomplished in two years what took Hezbollah twenty years to achieve (Kalian 2016). According to al-Rashed (2017), the PMF concept replicates what Khomeini's followers did after 1979 in establishing the IRGC to consolidate power and eliminate rival Iranian political groups.

Other PMF and Hezbollah similarities are: first, they are financed and supported by Iran; second, they are tools for Iran to implement its political agenda and threaten the region; third, they are proxies for Iranian aggression against countries such as Israel and the GCC states. Additionally, they

both express loyalty to Iran and its supreme leader (Anderson 2016). Furthermore, they have common ideological grounds and are adept at using nationalist pride to bolster their cause. However, there are two main differences between the PMF and Hezbollah. First, the former is funded by the Iraqi government, while the latter depends on its own resources and donations from the Shia population. Second, the PMF are now legally part of the Iraqi military, while Hezbollah is separate from the Lebanese army. In addition, according to Hadi Hashem, Hezbollah was created as a resistance organization, while the PMF were established to fight Daesh and prevent the fall of the Iraqi state into IS hands.

The core issue is that the PMF have similar political aspirations to Hezbollah and the IRGC, evidenced in their aim to assume power in Iraq— as will be illustrated below.

## 2. The Threat Posed by Iran's Expanded Influence across the Region

Iran nurtured the PMF in its efforts to extend its influence in Iraq and the region (Roggio and Toumaj 2016) indicating Iranian regional expansionist ambitions.

Some PMF militias are politically active, not necessarily agreeing with Iraqi government



policies. Some armed groups have not yet participated in politics, such as al-Nujaba and Kataib al-Imam Ali (Roggio and Toumaj 2016). The PMF leaders may yet transform into an organized political structure, following the Hezbollah or IRGC models.

Since the 2003 invasion of Iraq, Iran has invoked pan-Shiaism as an instrument of its regional expansionist policy. From the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings onwards, Tehran has focused on mobilizing Shia-related groups (Ataman 2016), to create the so-called the 'Shia Crescent' as a symbol for Iranian expansion stretching from Lebanon on the Mediterranean Sea, across Syria in the Middle East heartland, to Iraq and Bahrain on the Gulf, and



to Yemen on the Red Sea.

From the GCC perspective, the PMF are used by the Iran to project

its regional influence. Iran's regional expansionist policy has been a determining factor in the Middle East geopolitics, constituting the most pressing national security threat confronting GCC states. A number of indicators support that perspective such as when the PMF conducted a military exercise on the Iraqi-Saudi border in January 2017. According to Saif Al Zaabi, this military exercise was a signal from Iran to Saudi Arabia and other GCC states that Iran shares mutual borders with them through other countries.

Harakat al Nujaba, a Shia militia affiliated to the PMF, has threatened Kuwait and is seen as a destabilizing force along the Kuwaiti-Iraqi border. The militia challenges implementing the navigation agreement signed in 2012 between Iraq and Kuwait regarding Khor (inlet) Abdullah, claiming it as a serious violation of Iraqi sovereignty (Al Khaldi 2017). Furthermore, Shiite militias have condemned the war in Yemen and announced their willingness to aid the Houthis (Wehrey 49, 2016).

For more than a decade, GCC states have mostly chosen to disengage from Iraq, thereby losing influence, even among Iraqi Sunnis. Meanwhile, Iran's influence in Iraq and the entire region has been increasing (Riedel 2017) proving Iran's ambition to be the dominant





regional power – a threat that GCC states need to counter (Goldman & Rapp-Hooper, 2013).

For the first time in its recent history, Iran is extending its political and military reach to what it considers its rightful sphere of influence: Mesopotamia and the areas of the eastern Mediterranean and the Arabian Peninsula with sizeable Shiite communities. Over the past decade, with the Middle East descending into chaos, Iran has seized the opportunity to damage the interests of GCC states and to assert what it believes is its natural claim to regional dominance (Osman 2017).

### 3. Asymmetrical Threats Facing GCC States:

Asymmetrical warfare has become a strategy of choice among radical groups, and has evolved into a major national and international security threat (Long 2016). In essence, the extreme imbalance of military, economic and technological power between the parties is supplemented and aggravated by status inequality. The most ba-

sic form of asymmetric conflict is a confrontation between a non-state actor and a state, or states (Stepanova 2008, 14-19). Therefore the rise of the PMF increases asymmetrical threats to the GCC's security. GCC states have concerns that the incorporation of the PMF into the Iraqi army would only be a prelude to establishing this militia as a force resembling the IRGC. The GCC states face a common asymmetrical threat from the IRGC deploying unconventional and asymmetric (naval swarms, terrorists, human-wave ...) tactics (El-Dessouki 2015). The PMF places religious belief at the core of asymmetrical conflict following the threefold Iranian concept of political and religious prudence and faith in the velayat-e faqih (clerical rule); motivation and resilience in the face of adversity; and the culture of jihad and martyrdom.

Some analysts have even gone as far as to suggest equivalence between the IS and the PMF. Both have a sectarian orientation, deploy asymmetrical conflict methods and have unquestionably committed

atrocities (Cordesman 2014, 209, Hadad 2015). In other words, Iraqi Shia militias present a regional terrorist threat similar to IS. This pattern of conflict seems likely to prevail for the foreseeable future. The PMF's political and operational horizons are far more focused on Iraq and its immediate surroundings. With their anti-Sunni rhetoric and sabre rattling, particularly towards the GCC, their ideology and strategy could lead the likes of the Badr organization or AAH to target cities and communities in GCC states with terrorist attacks (Haddad 2015) with horrendous consequences.

The accompanying scenario is the increasing level of anti-Sunni revenge acts. According to Amnesty International (2017), PMF have been carrying out mass killings, torture and kidnappings against the Sunni population with Iranian support, thereby fueling a cycle of revenge killings and ethnic hatred in Iraq and beyond. Such a scenario raises the nightmare prospect of prolonged, bloody, uncontrolled violence between Sunni and Shia populations. The risk of a fresh





explosion of unrest is heightened amid calls for revenge among the Sunni population in Iraq and the region and escalating tensions and levels of terrorist violence across the region.

## Conclusion

Iraq is pivotal to the GCC states as the success of one of the factions engaged in the war against IS would mean this group assuming power in this region with all its vast resources. To counter the raft of troubling trends in Iraq, the GCC states need to re-engage with Iraq. In a personal interview, H.E. Al-Alusi stated that the GCC states had abandoned Iraq after the US invasion in 2003, which served as a platform for Iran to heighten its influence in Baghdad. The first element of a re-engagement strategy should be support for the Iraqi government of Haider al-Abadi and the Iraqi armed forces as they campaign to defeat IS. That would effectively counter-balance Iran's influence in Iraq. In this regard, the visit of the Saudi Foreign Minister to Baghdad in February 2017, the first such trip since 1990, presages an initiative which needs to be sustained.

## Abbreviations

AAH: Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq or League of Righteous People  
 GCC: Arabian Gulf  
 IRGC: Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps  
 IS/ Daesh: The Islamic State  
 ISF: Iraqi Security Forces  
 KH: Kata'ib Hizballah or Hezbollah Brigades  
 PMF: Popular Mobilization Forces/ al-Hashd al-Shaabi militia  
 SAS: Saraya al-Salam or Peace Brigades  
 The US: The United States

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# Avoiding Flawed Assumptions:



## Advice for Strategic Leaders



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Initial assumptions are a vital element of strategic decision making. Terry Deibel, who taught strategy at the National War College for three decades, argued in his leading work that “the battle for sound strategy can often be lost right here, at the very beginning” (Deibel 37-36 ,2007). Leading business thinkers, from Peter Drucker to Richard Rummelt, have also identified the importance of what Rummelt calls “diagnosis” to successful strategy formulation (Drucker 1994; Rumelt 79 ,2012). Indeed, more than 2500 years ago, Sun Tzu argued that a successful leader should know both one’s self and one’s enemy in order to succeed (Sun Tzu n.d., 3.18). It is thus fitting that at the National Defense College, assumptions about the domestic and international strategic context serve as the initial phase of the strategy process. Our graduates begin their study by seeking to better understand the UAE and the global order, so they can think with sober clarity about their assumptions about both their own country and the world it inhabits (NDC n.d.).





Yet while much scholarly attention has been given to how failures of individual leaders or groups of decision-makers lead to flawed formulation or operationalization of a strategy, less attention has been given to avoiding erroneous assumptions at the start of the process (Lombardi 2011; Hammes 2010). Accordingly, this article identifies points when flawed assumptions can take root, at the individual, group, and societal level, and gives strategic leaders advice on how to avoid such error.

Individual leaders are convenient targets for blame after strategic

failure. One of the most frequently criticized leaders of modern history is the British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, whose confident proclamation of “peace for our time” proved to be a hopelessly naive characterization of the world in 1938, less than a year before the start of the Second World War. Chamberlain’s assumptions about the intentions of Nazi Germany were fundamentally flawed. Chamberlain believed that Germany was content with the map of Europe after taking territory from Czechoslovakia, and that Hitler’s commitment in the Munich Agreement that “the

method of consultation shall be the method adopted to deal with any other questions that may concern our two countries” was sincere. Instead, Hitler’s territorial ambitions were limitless, as Nazi Germany proved to be a textbook revisionist state (Chamberlain 1938).

Why would a leader base his or her assessment on assumptions about another actor or about the global context on erroneous assumptions? More than 700 years ago, Ibn Khaldun wrote on the danger of cognitive bias: “If the soul is infected with partisanship for a particular opinion or sect,



it accepts without a moment's hesitation the information that is agreeable to it. Prejudice and partisanship obscure the critical faculty and preclude critical investigation" (Ibn Khaldun ,1967 35). Research in decision-making suggests that humans frequently adapt information to fit their own preconceived expectations about a given situation (Tversky and Kahneman 1974).

Thus, the first step a leader should take in avoiding flawed assumptions is to make an honest assessment of possible biases and blind spots. While this is a difficult practice, the wise leader

will take Sun Tzu's advice to heart, deeply questioning his or her own assumptions for possible bias or misperception before taking a decision. Yet it is important to remember Chamberlain did not make his decision for appeasement on his own. Good group decision-making practice should help inoculate strategic leaders against the error of any one individual.

In a classic account of flawed decision-making by a number of leaders, psychologist Irving Janus coined the term "groupthink" to describe how poor group practices can lead to error. Among the most important symptoms,

Janus explains how groups with conviction of their own superiority engage in "collective rationalization," disregarding alternatives. Symptomatic groups adopt an illusion of uniform view, and "mindguards" exclude any dissenting voices. Such practice leads to the uncritical adoption of dubious assumptions (Janis 1972; Janis 1982). Indeed, studies of US decision-making in Vietnam and Iraq have found many of these symptoms present in the highest councils of American government, from Lyndon Johnson's derisive treatment of opponents of his Vietnam policy to Dick Cheney's





exclusion of Iraqi dissenters from access to President Bush (Levine 2004).

Janus suggests that solutions to groupthink lie in deliberate choices about how groups function. Of particular note is the importance of the leader selecting members to question established assumptions and the leader's role in creating a group composed of a wide range of perspectives in order to avoid expectations of uniformity (Janus 1972; Janus 1982). Abraham Lincoln's "team of rivals" cabinet is an oft-cited example of how a decision-making group with very different perspectives worked

well together. Thus, a strategic leader can further protect against the bias he or she might hold, or that any member of a decision-making group might have, through careful attention to how his or her key leadership group functions (Goodwin 2005).

But even a group following best practices can fall victim to flawed assumptions at the system or societal level. Before World War One, most strategists believed in what Stephen Van Evera calls "the cult of the offensive"—an expectation that wars would be resolved quickly because offensive forces held an advantage. This view was shared widely across Europe. But this assumption about the nature of war failed to consider the dramatic changes in military technology, particularly the invention of the machine gun and trench warfare. Instead of a quick victorious war, the advantage of defensive technology turned battles during World War One into contests where thousands of lives were lost for meters of ground (Van Evera 1984).

Jared Diamond, writing in his work on societal collapse, argues that perceptions of cultural invincibility or superiority can also lead to flawed decisions. He suggests, that Norse colonists of Greenland, for example, allowed their preference for meat and other luxuries to lead them to adopt an unsustainable lifestyle that could not be maintained on Greenland (Diamond 2005).

When an erroneous understanding is widely held, the likelihood of a flawed assumption is high. Yet in a globalized world, leaders can take advantage of this interconnectivity to build a group of leaders with broader expertise, giving their decision-making group the expertise to closely evaluate both international and local assumptions in the quest for accuracy.

In the end, well-founded

assumptions are a foundation of good strategic decision-making. By careful attention to his or her own biases as well as careful attention to group dynamics and system-level errors, strategic leaders can set up their strategic decision-making for success.

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# Britain's “Return” To the Gulf



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In a speech delivered at the Manama Dialogue in December 2016, British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson declared in no uncertain terms that “Britain is back East of Suez”. Criticizing the decision to withdraw British forces from the Gulf in 1971, Johnson outlined plans for an increased military presence in the region, including the opening of a permanent Royal Navy base in Bahrain, the establishment of a British Army training facility in Oman, and the formation of a Gulf Defence Staff in Dubai to coordinate British military activities. (Johnson, 2016) Johnson’s speech followed a similar, if less colorful statement in Bahrain by Prime Minister Theresa May, who declared her intent “to establish the strongest possible trading relationships between the UK and the Gulf.” (May, 2016)





These initiatives form part of May's "Global Britain" strategy, which seeks to strengthen ties with overseas partners as Britain negotiates its withdrawal from the European Union (EU). Commentators in Britain and elsewhere have dismissed this approach as a futile attempt to compensate for the economic and diplomatic dislocation that will follow Britain's departure from the EU. They have also criticized the May government's willingness to engage with states whose foreign and domestic policies are often at odds with those of the United Kingdom. The wisdom of Brexit

aside, Britain's efforts to bolster its ties in the Gulf are not simply a ploy to distract from the economic uncertainty that the country now faces. Plans to strengthen British economic links with the region have been underway since at least 2010, when Prime Minister David Cameron announced the "Gulf Initiative", which aimed to increase trade and investment between Britain and the GCC. Plans to open a naval base in Bahrain were confirmed in 2014, and the following year the British Strategic Defence Review recommended a "permanent and more substantial military presence" in the Gulf.

(Bismarck, 2016)

Nor do British initiatives in the region represent a desperate attempt to secure allies whose policies run contrary to British values and interests. Britain's history in the region is a long one, extending back to the late eighteenth century when the British signed the first of a series of pacts with the rulers of the Omani Coast in order to protect the shipping route to India. In 1820, the British moved into the Gulf itself, signing an anti-piracy treaty with local rulers, which effectively established the region as an informal part of the British Empire. For the next 150 years, Britain ensured the maritime security of the Gulf, and for much of the twentieth century it managed the foreign relations of regional leaders. (Onley, 2009) Britain's formal withdrawal in 1971 had significant consequences, most notably the formation of the United Arab Emirates. But the British never abandoned their friends, intervening to support their allies and maintain the stability of the region. British forces played an integral role in defeating communist-backed insurgents in Oman's Dhofar province from 1970-75. British soldiers, including a Special Air Service (SAS) team, led Omani regular forces and firqat tribal militias in combat, supported from the air by pilots on secondment from the RAF. Seconded British officers also held senior command and staff positions in the Sultan of Oman's Army, Navy and Air Force. (Worrall, 2014) Long after the defeat of the insurgents, British personnel remained in command and training roles. There are still seconded British personnel in Oman today. Similarly, the British Ministry of Defence (MoD) has maintained an advisory team in Saudi Arabia since the early 1970s to oversee British training and maintenance contracts with the Royal Saudi Air Force. The Royal Navy returned to the Gulf in 1980,



initiating what became known as the Armilla patrol in response to the instability created by the Iranian Revolution and the Iran-Iraq War. Britain also participated in both coalitions that went to war against Saddam Hussein's Iraq in 1991 and 2003.

Therefore, rather than characterizing recent British initiatives as a "return to East of Suez", it is more accurate to describe them as a "rationalisation" of relationships and activities that have continued since 1971. (Stansfield and Kelly, 2013, p.13) These initiatives serve several long-term British interests. First, while GCC countries will never form a market comparable in size to the EU, the Gulf represents an increasingly important economic partner for Britain. British exports to the region total more than £20 billion each year. Among Britain's non-EU export markets, the Gulf region is second only to the United States in size. More than 160,000 British citizens live and work in the region, with more than 100,000 living in the UAE. In addition, there are more than 20,000 students from the Gulf enrolled in universities

in London alone. (Johnson, 2016) Given that Brexit will likely lead to a reduction in Europeans pursuing higher education in the UK, students from GCC countries are likely to become an even more important source of revenue for the British higher education system. GCC investment in Britain is also significant. Qatar, for example holds more than £35 billion in British investments, including high-profile commercial real estate holdings and a share of Barclay's Bank. (Alkhalisi, 2017)

Secondly, Britain accrues important military benefits from its ties in the Gulf. Maintaining a presence in the region affords all three services training opportunities as well as the ability to build relationships with their counterparts in GCC armed forces. Such relationships are particularly important in facilitating the success of multinational military actions, which will likely constitute the majority of operations in which the British armed forces are involved for the foreseeable future. Finally, a more prominent military role in the Gulf also serves Britain's diplomatic interests. Not only does

it convey Britain's commitment to its regional allies, it supports the country's most valued alliance, its "special relationship" with America. (Stansfield and Kelly, 2013, p.10) Consisting of only 1,500 military personnel, 7 warships and a handful of military aircraft, Britain's presence is much smaller than that of the United States. Nevertheless, by committing military forces to the Gulf and investing in facilities to support them, Britain is signaling its long-term commitment to preserving the status quo in the region and deterring revisionist powers like Iran. This does not render the American military presence superfluous, but it does spread the burden, enabling the United States to deploy its forces to address contingencies elsewhere. The extent to which Britain benefits from this burden-sharing is debatable. The country's leaders, however, have long believed that their willingness to contribute to the maintenance of the US-led global order has strengthened their credibility and influence in Washington.

Thus, rather than being a desperate attempt to offset the





consequences of Brexit, Britain's recent reengagement in the Gulf is both rooted in history and linked to long-term British national interests. It will benefit the UAE and its GCC allies. While Britain cannot compete with the economic and military power of the United States, the US currently faces a wide array of challenges from rising powers, rogue states and non-state actors. There is also significant debate among American leaders regarding the value of the country's existing military and economic partnerships. Even if the US was not preoccupied with other concerns, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have left Americans averse to major military

commitments in the Middle East. Britain's resources are relatively modest, but it wants and needs a strong relationship with its allies in the Gulf. This can no longer be the paternalistic relationship that prevailed prior to 1971, and British leaders know it. The vastly increased economic, diplomatic and military power of the GCC countries, along with Britain's impending departure from the EU, mean that the new partnership will develop on an equal footing. Regardless of events in the United States or elsewhere, America will remain an indispensable ally to the Gulf states. But an additional partnership with Britain, a state

with extensive experience in the region and an abiding interest in its stability, can only benefit the UAE and its neighbors.

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# WHY IS RUSSIA IN THE MIDDLE EAST BATTLEFIELD?

It goes back to ten years ago when the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, declared that security threats had forced Russia to resume the Soviet-era practice of regular patrol missions using strategic bombers beyond their national airspace (Faulconbridge, Guy 2007). President Putin's mention about security

threats should be interpreted in such a way that the self-assertive politics of the US-led Western World against Russia after the downfall of the Soviet Union has resulted in an insurgent and aggressive Russia in global politics.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union (aka the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), such flights by

strategic bombers were stopped in 1992 (NTI 2007). Since then, Russia has lived in a closed society and economy and mostly dealt with domestic and regional problems; e.g. conflicts and struggles relating to internal politics, instability, poor economic conditions, and Chechnya, until Vladimir Putin took over power from Boris Yeltsin in 1999. From then onwards Russia



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commenced to improve the national economy based on its natural resources; i.e. oil and natural gas, agriculture and the defense industry were revived. The Russian defense industry leveraged the operational capabilities of the Russian army and Russia began the delivery and export of arms to its allies and other countries. Henceforth, Russia was back in business as a political, economic and military power.

The silent period of Russia lying low between 1992 and 2007 was not reciprocated by the Western world. Indeed, the Western countries kept surrounding Russia in the North Atlantic and Eastern Europe, especially Ukraine and the Caucasus. Former Warsaw Pact countries joined the Western Alliance by obtaining member status or being a candidate to join the European Union (EU) and NATO. Furthermore, the Western-backed Orange

Revolution in Ukraine and the Rose Revolution in Georgia, which overthrew pro-Russian governments in Ukraine and Georgia, completed the surrounding of Russia by the Western World. The invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq by the US in 2001 and 2003 respectively completed the circle around Russia as well as ushering a new age of a "Unipolar World." As Russia regained its soft power (i.e. economic and diplomatic) and hard power (i.e. military) and the encirclement of Russia by the Western alliance persisted, Russia began diplomatic, economic and military campaigns in order to be able to reach stability and equilibrium with the Western World, avoid the Western encirclement and uphold Russia's interests overseas.

The recommencement of strategic bomber flights in 2007 was the symbolic first step. Russia started long range patrol missions over the Atlantic, the North Sea and surveillance over the North Pole. After that, the Russo-Georgian War broke out in 2008 and Russia deployed its forces in the autonomous republics of South Ossetia, and Abkhazia of Georgia and, consequently, Georgia was destabilized by Russia. In this way, Russia was able to overthrow the Western encirclement and also started to establish a new balance in world politics.

Once Russia regained its historical and powerful position in global politics, it became clear that Russia would be more involved again in the Middle East. Besides low-level military involvement in Syria since the Soviet era, Russia was not able to participate or affect Middle East politics. When the Obama period began in the US in 2009, the US Middle East policy was altered in such a way that the US would never exert a heavy military presence in the region. In the case of the Syria crisis, the US would train and equip the rebels and opposition groups against the

Ba'ath regime and conduct proxy warfare using those trained and equipped groups as opposed to Gulf War between 1990 and 1991 and invasion of Iraq in 2003 (BBC NEWS 2015). Moreover, the US government announced that the troops in Iraq would be withdrawn. The aim of the new US policy was to focus and be more involved in the South Pacific region and the Far East. The shift in the US foreign policy coincided with the rise of Russia. The trigger event sequence was the Arab Spring that started in December 2010. The Arab Spring, supported by the Western media and press and politics, led to the fall or change of regimes in Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt. Then the Arab Spring started in Syria in 2011, which was the only country where Russia had maintained a presence in the Middle East.

Being the sole Russian military base in the Middle East and to keep the balance with the Western World, Russia fortified Hmeimim Air Base in Latakia and the naval base in Tartus, Syria. Russia deployed a large number of military personnel, multi-role fighters, bombers, naval units, an aircraft carrier and air defense systems. Although it was alleged that the Syria crisis is directly related and is the result of the Qatar-Turkey Gas Pipeline project that would affect the volume of Russia natural gas export, the Russian and US involvement in the Syria crisis has been only pursuing their respective military posture in the region together with their allies in the region, which are controlling access to the key military bases (Porter, Gareth 2016). Russian deployment in Syria was opposed to the US approach, which kept a very limited military footprint and relied on proxy warfare conducted by the Syrian opposition, Kurds and other moderate Islamist groups (BBC NEWS 2015). Moreover, the US proxy war approach incurred the second level of proxy war between the groups in the bat-







tlefield in Syria and the countries that were supporting those groups, namely Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar as well as EU countries (BBC NEWS 2015, The Guardian 2012, National Coalition 2017). Western-

backed groups in Ukraine were also tasked as proxies against pro-Russian regions in Ukraine to detract Russia's attention from Syria (Friedman, George 2016). However, the consequences of US action

in Europe resulted in the Russian annexation of Crimea and the segregation of Donetsk and Luhansk from Ukraine. Besides Russia's military deployment, the involvement of the other allies of Syria,





**Figure 1: Russia Influence**

which are Iran, Hezbollah (Lebanon) and Iraq (mostly Shia paramilitary), is a direct deployment as opposed to multi-layer proxies of US. Therefore, Russia has propagated its influence in the Middle East by standing by Syria and also establishing a new alliance with Iran, Iraq, and Hezbollah in the Middle East against the Western World.

The US policy implemented by President Obama to mainly focus on Pacific and the Far East works well by increasing Russian involvement in the Middle East. In other words, the US is successful to keep Russia away from the Pacific region by keeping Russia busy in Syria (Friedman, George 2016). Being aligned with Russia in different platforms, the US would not prefer Russia to interfere with the problems between the US and China. As China increases its efforts to

reclaim territory in the South China Sea using artificial islands, Beijing keeps threatening US economic and military interests and has exerted pressure on Philippines, Japan, and Vietnam. In response, the US has increased the support for the countries in question by establishing defense treaties, military deployments, patrol missions and economic partnerships (Global Conflict Tracker 2017).

In the current arena of world politics, the superpower states, the US and Russia are pursuing their own agendas. Russia has gained leverage in global politics to pursue its historical position and global interests, and the unipolar characteristic of the world after the collapse of the Soviet Union has been transformed into a multipolar scenario by the rise of Russia as well as China. The other coun-

tries in the Middle East, Europe, and Asia, which are either aligned with US or Russia, are not powerful or decisive actors in world politics, whereas Russia and the US fulfill this role. Therefore, the problems, interests, benefits and conflicts of today and the future will be shaped by the common and conflicting interests of the US and Russia.

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## ● VISION

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